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2018

**ABOLITION**

OF THE

**AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE,**

BY THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

---

ABRIDGED FROM CLARKSON.

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TOGETHER WITH

A BRIEF VIEW OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE

SLAVE-TRADE AND OF SLAVERY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

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*AUGUSTA:*

PUBLISHED BY P. A. BRINSMADE,

At the Depository of Kennebec Co. S. S. Union.

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"Abolition of the African Slave-trade, by the British Parliament. Abridged from Clarkson. Together with a brief view of the present state of the Slave-trade and of Slavery. In two volumes. Augusta: Published by P. A. Brinsmade, at the Depository of Kennebec Co. S. S. Union. 1830."

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J. MUSSEY, *Clerk of the District of Maine*

A true copy as of record, { ATTEST, J. MUSSEY,  
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## PREFACE.

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IN offering to the public Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave-trade, in an abridged form, there is little need of apology. The work is one of intrinsic and permanent value, and of engrossing interest. He who begins to read it will find it a self-denial to stop till he has arrived at the end. And no person of thought and susceptibility can go through with it attentively, without benefit to his mind and heart.

The great principles of justice and benevolence which are developed in it, and illustrated and supported by an array of facts that touch the deep sensibilities of the soul, are of universal application. Furthermore, it is highly useful to contemplate the spirit and movements of those individuals who have conceived, undertaken, and prosecuted to a successful accomplishment, measures of difficult and hazardous benevolence.

An abridgement has been attempted, because it was seen that it might be made without any serious injury to the work. The thread of the narrative is preserved unbroken. And all the main and interesting facts are embraced. Whilst this is done the price of the book is considerably reduced so that it can be much more extensively circulated than if published entire.

One important design of the abridgement is to fit the work for the libraries of Sabbath Schools, where

it cannot but be exceedingly useful. The simplicity with which it is written, will bring the most of it within the comprehension of children, whilst the numerous affecting incidents it relates, will take and hold their attention, and the spirit of humanity and benevolence it breathes will improve their hearts. The influence of it will be to train up the rising generation in an abhorrence of slavery and oppression, and with a growing determination to use their endeavours to loose the chains and alleviate the miseries of those who are still held in bondage.

---

Since the above was in type, the following letter addressed to the publisher, has been received from a gentleman most favourably known for his distinguished devotedness and fidelity to the best interests of Africa and of her oppressed Sons; and eminently qualified to appreciate the value and discern the tendency of any book designed to affect those interests.

OFFICE OF THE COLONIZATION SOCIETY, }  
*Washington, March 12, 1830.* }

DEAR SIR,—I concur with you entirely in the opinion, that an abridgement of “Clarkson’s History of the abolition of the Slave trade,” adapted to the minds of youth, would be a work of great value—awaken feelings of deep interest in the sufferings and condition of the African race, and essentially contribute to increase the efforts which are already commenced for their elevation to the light of knowledge and of freedom, and to the enjoyment of all the hopes and blessings of Christianity. So vast a work is not within the power of a single generation; and we are solemnly bound to see that those to whom it is here-

fter to be committed, are not left either indifferent or incompetent to the task. No one can peruse the work of Mr. Clarkson, without feeling all the sympathies and energies of his nature aroused for the relief of oppressed and bleeding humanity. We are taught by it, most impressively, that nothing which ought to be done, should be deemed impracticable ; that a few noble spirits may excite a whole nation to action, and in opposition to interests the most extensive, and prejudices the most invincible, finally triumph over evils the most enormous and appalling which have ever afflicted mankind. To the minds of children and youth it must prove eminently attractive ; and susceptible as they are of the deepest and most permanent impressions, the affecting incidents and statements of the History will be fixed upon them in characters which can never be effaced. All who read it will be convinced of the terrible cruelties of the Slave-trade, and the utter injustice of Slavery, and be prepared to contend with the utmost vigour and perseverance, for the entire suppression of the one, and the universal abolition of the other.

I trust, then, that you will fulfil your benevolent and truly philanthropic purpose, and that you will be encouraged to complete in the best manner, the work which you have commenced. It will prove a most worthy and useful offering to the African cause.

With the most perfect respect and esteem,  
Sir, your friend, &c. &c.

R. R. GURLEY.

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# **HISTORY**

OF THE

## **ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE.**



### **CHAPTER I.**

#### *Introduction.*

AMONG the evils, corrected or subdued, either by the general influence of Christianity on the minds of men, or by particular associations of Christians, the African\* Slave-trade may very properly be considered as occupying the foremost place.

To value the blessing of the abolition as we ought, or to appreciate the joy and gratitude which we ought to feel concerning it, we must enter a little into the circumstances of the trade. Our statement, however, of these needs not be long. A few pages will do all that is necessary! A glance only into such a subject as this will be sufficient to affect the heart; to arouse our indignation and our pity; and to teach us the importance of the victory obtained.

The first subject for consideration, towards enabling us to make the estimate in question, will be that of the nature of the evil belonging to the Slave-trade. This may be seen by examining it in three points of view: First, As it has been proved to arise on the continent of Africa in the

\* Slavery had been before annihilated by Christianity, I mean in the West of Europe, at the close of the twelfth century.



course of reducing the inhabitants of it to slavery ; Secondly, In the course of conveying them from thence to the lands or colonies of other nations ; And, Thirdly, In continuing them there as slaves.

To see it as it has been shown to arise in the first case, let us suppose ourselves on the Continent just mentioned. Well then : We are landed ; we are already upon our travels ; we have just passed through one forest ; we are now come to a more open place, which indicates an approach to habitations. And what object is that, which first obtrudes itself upon our sight ? Who is that wretched woman, whom we discover under that noble tree, wringing her hands, and beating her breast, as if in the agonies of despair ? Three days has she been there at intervals to look and to watch, and this is the fourth morning, and no tidings of her children yet. Beneath its spreading boughs they were accustomed to play : But alas ! the savage man-stealer interrupted their playful mirth, and has taken them for ever from her sight.

But let us leave the cries of this unfortunate woman, and hasten into another district : And what do we first see here ? Who is he that just now started across the narrow pathway, as if afraid of a human face ? What is that sudden rustling among the leaves ? Why are those persons flying from our approach, and hiding themselves in yon darkest thicket ? Behold, as we get into the plain, a deserted village ! The rice-field has been just trodden down around it. An aged man, venerable by his silver beard, lies wounded and dying near the threshold of his hut. War, suddenly instigated by avarice, has just visited the dwellings which we see. The old have been

butchered, because unfit for slavery, and the young have been carried off, except such as have fallen in the conflict, or have escaped among the woods behind us.

But let us hasten from this cruel scene, which gives rise to so many melancholy reflections. Let us cross yon distant river, and enter into some new domain. But are we relieved even here from afflicting spectacles? Look at that immense crowd, which appears to be gathered in a ring. See the accused innocent in the middle. The ordeal of poisonous water has been administered to him, as a test of his innocence or his guilt. He begins to be sick, and pale. Alas! yon mournful shriek of his relatives confirms that the loss of his freedom is now sealed.

And whither shall we go now? The night is approaching fast. Let us find some friendly hut, where sleep may make us forget for a while the sorrows of the day. Behold a hospitable native ready to receive us at his door! Let us avail ourselves of his kindness. And now let us give ourselves to repose. But why, when our eyelids are but just closed, do we find ourselves thus suddenly awakened? What is the meaning of the noise around us, of the trampling of people's feet, of the rustling of the bow, the quiver, and the lance? Let us rise up and inquire. Behold! the inhabitants are all alarmed! A wakeful woman has shown them yon distant column of smoke and blaze. The neighbouring village is on fire. The prince, unfaithful to the sacred duty of the protection of his subjects, has surrounded them. He is now burning their habitations, and seizing, as saleable booty, the fugitives from the flames.

Such then are some of the scenes that have been passing in Africa in consequence of the existence of the Slave-trade; or such is the nature of the evil, as it has shown itself in the first of the cases we have noticed. Let us now estimate it as it has been proved to exist in the second; or let us examine the state of the unhappy Africans, reduced to slavery in this manner, while on board the vessels, which are to convey them across the ocean to other lands. And here I must observe at once, that, as far as this part of the evil is concerned, I am at a loss to describe it. Where shall I find words to express properly their sorrow, as arising from the reflection of being parted for ever from their friends, their relatives, and their country? Where shall I find language to paint in appropriate colours the horror of mind brought on by thoughts of their future unknown destination, of which they can augur nothing but misery from all that they have yet seen? How shall I make known their situation, while labouring under painful disease. or while struggling in the suffocating holds of their prisons like animals inclosed in an exhausted receiver? How shall I describe their feelings as exposed to all the personal indignities, which lawless appetite or brutal passion may suggest? How shall I exhibit their sufferings as determining to refuse sustenance and die, or as resolving to break their chains, and, disdaining to live as slaves, to punish their oppressors? How shall I give an idea of their agony, when under various punishments and tortures for their reputed crimes? Indeed every part of this subject defies my powers, and I must therefore satisfy myself and the reader with a general representation, or

in the words of a celebrated member of Parliament, that "Never was so much human suffering condensed in so small a space."

I come now to the evil, as it has been proved to arise in the third case; or to consider the situation of the unhappy victims of the trade, when their painful voyages are over, or after they have been landed upon their destined shores. And here we are to view them first under the degrading light of cattle. We are to see them examined, handled, selected, separated, and sold. Alas! relatives are separated from relatives, as if, like cattle, they had no rational intellect, no power of feeling the nearness of relationship, nor sense of the duties belonging to the ties of life! We are next to see them labouring, and this for the benefit of those, to whom they are under no obligation, by any law either natural or divine, to obey. We are to see them, if refusing the commands of their purchasers, however weary, or feeble, or indisposed, subject to corporal punishments, and, if forcibly resisting them, to death. We are to see them in a state of general degradation and misery. The knowledge, which their oppressors have of their own crime in having violated the rights of nature, and of the disposition of the injured to seek all opportunities of revenge, produces a fear which dictates to them the necessity of a system of treatment by which they shall keep up a wide distinction between the two, and by which the noble feelings of the latter shall be kept down, and their spirits broken. We are to see them again subject to individual persecution, as anger, or malice, or any bad passion may suggest. Hence the whip; the chain; the iron-collar. Hence the various modes of

private torture, of which so many accounts have been truly given. Nor can such horrible cruelties be discovered so as to be made punishable, while the testimony of any number of the oppressed is invalid against the oppressors, however they may be offences against the laws. And, lastly, we are to see their innocent offspring, against whose personal liberty the shadow of an argument cannot be advanced, inheriting all the miseries of their parents' lot.

The evil then, as far as it has been hitherto viewed, presents to us in its three several departments a measure of human suffering not to be equalled; not to be calculated; not to be described. But would that we could consider this part of the subject as dismissed! Would that in each of the departments now examined there was no counterpart left us to contemplate! but this cannot be. For if there be persons, who suffer unjustly, there must be others, who oppress. And if there be those who oppress, there must be to the suffering, which has been occasioned, a corresponding portion of immorality or guilt.

We are obliged then to view the counterpart of the evil in question, before we can make a proper estimate of the nature of it. And, in examining this part of it, we shall find that we have a no less frightful picture to behold than in the former cases; or that, while the miseries endured by the unfortunate Africans excite our pity on the one hand, the vices, which are connected with them, provoke our indignation and abhorrence on the other. The Slave-trade, in this point of view, must strike us as an immense mass of evil on account of the criminality at-

tached to it, as displayed in the various branches of it, which have already been examined. For, to take the counterpart of the evil in the first of these, can we say, that no moral turpitude is to be placed to the account of those, who living on the continent of Africa give birth to the enormities, which take place in consequence of the prosecution of this trade? Is not that man made morally worse, who is induced to become a tyger to his species, or who, instigated by avarice, lies in wait in the thicket to get possession of his fellow-man? Is no injustice manifest in the land, where the prince, unfaithful to his duty, seizes his innocent subjects, and sells them for slaves? Are no moral evils produced among those communities, which make war upon other communities for the sake of plunder, and without any previous provocation or offence? Does no crime attach to those, who accuse others falsely, or who multiply and divide crimes for the sake of the profit of the punishment, and who for the same reason continue the use of barbarous and absurd ordeals as a test of innocence or guilt?

In the second of these branches the counterpart of the evil is to be seen in the conduct of those, who purchase the miserable natives in their own country, and convey them to distant lands. And here questions, similar to the former, may be asked. Do they experience no corruption of their nature, or become chargeable with no violation of right, who, when they go with their ships to this continent, know the enormities which their visits there will occasion, who buy their fellow-creature man, and this, knowing the way in which he comes into their

hands, and who chain, and imprison, and scourge him? Do the moral feelings of those persons escape without injury, whose hearts are hardened? And can the hearts of those be otherwise than hardened, who are familiar with the tears and groans of innocent strangers forcibly torn away from every thing that is dear to them in life, who are accustomed to see them on board their vessels in a state of suffocation and in the agonies of despair, and who are themselves in the habits of the cruel use of arbitrary power?

The counterpart of the evil in its third branch is to be seen in the conduct of those, who, when these miserable people have been landed, purchase and carry them to their respective homes. And let us see whether a mass of wickedness is not generated also in the present case. Can those have nothing to answer for, who separate the faithful ties which nature and religion have created? Can their feelings be otherwise than corrupted, who consider their fellow-creatures as brutes, or treat those as cattle, who may become the temples of the Holy Spirit, and in whom the Divinity disdains not himself to dwell? Is there no injustice in forcing men to labour without wages? Is there no breach of duty, when we are commanded to clothe the naked, and feed the hungry, and visit the sick and in prison, in exposing them to want, in torturing them by cruel punishment, and in grinding them down by hard labour, so as to shorten their days? Is there no crime in adopting a system, which keeps down all the noble faculties of their souls, and which positively debases and corrupts their nature? Is there no crime in perpetuating these evils among their innocent off-

spring? And finally, besides all these crimes, is there not naturally in the familiar sight of the exercise, but more especially in the exercise itself, of uncontrolled power, that which vitiates the internal man? In seeing misery stalk daily over the land. do not all become insensibly hardened? By giving birth to that misery themselves, do they not become abandoned? In what state of society are the corrupt appetites, so easily, so quickly, and so frequently indulged, and where else, by means of frequent indulgence, do these experience such a monstrous growth? Where else is the temper subject to such frequent irritation, or passion to such little control? Yes; if the unhappy slave is in an unfortunate situation, so is the tyrant who holds him. Action and reaction are equal to each other, as well in the moral as in the natural world. You cannot exercise an improper dominion over a fellow-creature, but by a wise ordering of Providence you must necessarily injure yourself.

Having now considered the nature of the evil of the Slave-trade in its three separate departments of suffering, and in its corresponding counterparts of guilt, I shall make a few observations on the extent of it.

On this subject it must strike us, that the misery and the crimes included in the evil, as it has been found in Africa, were not like common maladies, which make a short or periodical visit and then are gone, but that they were continued daily. Nor were they like diseases, which from local causes, attack a village or a town, and by the skill of the physician, under the blessing of Providence, are removed, but they affected a whole continent. The trade



with all its horrors began at the river Senegal, and continued, winding with the coast, through its several geographical divisions to Cape Negro ; a distance of more than three thousand miles. In various lines or paths formed at right angles from the shore, and passing into the heart of the country, slaves were procured and brought down. The distance, which many of them travelled, was immense. Those, who have been in Africa, have assured us, that they came as far as from the sources of their largest rivers, which we know to be many hundred miles in-land, and the natives have told us, in their way of computation, that they come a journey of many moons.

It must strike us again, that the misery and the crimes, included in the evil, as it has been shown in the transportation, had no ordinary bounds. They were not to be seen in the crossing of a river, but of an ocean. They did not begin in the morning and end at night, but were continued for many weeks, and sometimes by casualties for a quarter of the year. They were not limited to the precincts of a solitary ship, but were spread among many vessels ; and these were so constantly passing, that the ocean itself never ceased to be a witness of their existence.

And it must strike us finally, that the misery and crimes, included in the evil as it has been found in foreign lands, were not confined within the shores of a little island. Most of the islands of a continent, and many of these of considerable population and extent, were filled with them. And the continent itself, to which these geographically belong, was widely polluted by their

domain. Hence, if we were to take the vast extent of space occupied by these crimes and sufferings from the heart of Africa to its shores, and that which they filled on the continent of America and the islands adjacent, and were to join the crimes and sufferings in one to those in the other by the crimes and sufferings which took place in the track of the vessels successively crossing the Atlantic, we should behold a vast belt as it were of physical and moral evil, reaching through land and ocean to the length of nearly half the circle of the globe.

The next view, which I shall take of this evil, will be as it relates to the difficulty of subduing it.

This difficulty may be supposed to have been more than ordinarily great. Many evils of a public nature, which existed in former times, were the offspring of ignorance and superstition, and they were subdued of course by the progress of light and knowledge. But the evil in question began in avarice. It was nursed also by worldly interest. It did not therefore so easily yield to the usual correctives of disorders in the world. We may observe also, that the interest by which it was thus supported, was not that of a few individuals, nor of one body, but of many bodies of men. It was interwoven again into the system of the commerce and of the revenue of nations. Hence the merchant; the planter; the mortgagee; the manufacturer; the politician; the legislator; the cabinet minister; lifted up their voices against the annihilation of it. For these reasons the Slave-trade may be considered, like the fabulous hydra, to have had a hundred heads, every one of which it was necessary to

cut off before it could be subdued. And as none but Hercules was fitted to conquer the one, so nothing less than extraordinary prudence, courage, labour, and patience, could overcome the other. To protection in this manner by his hundred interests it was owing, that the monster stalked in security for so long a time. He stalked too in the open day, committing his mighty depredations. And when good men, whose duty it was to mark him as the object of their destruction, began to assail him, he did not fly, but gnashed his teeth at them, growling savagely at the same time, and putting himself into a posture of defiance.

We see then, in whatever light we consider the Slave-trade, whether we examine into the nature of it, or whether we look into the extent of it, or whether we estimate the difficulty of subduing it, we must conclude that no evil more monstrous has ever existed upon earth. But if so, then we have proved the truth of the position, that the abolition of it ought to be accounted by us as one of the greatest blessings, and that it ought to be one of the most copious sources of our joy. Indeed I do not know, how we can sufficiently express what we ought to feel upon this occasion. It becomes us as individuals to rejoice. It becomes us as a nation to rejoice. It becomes us even to perpetuate our joy to our posterity.

And as the contemplation of the removal of this monstrous evil should excite in us the most pleasing and grateful sensations, so the perusal of the history of it should afford us lessons, which it must be useful to us to know or to be reminded of. For it cannot be otherwise than useful

to us to know the means which have been used, and the different persons who have moved, in so great a cause. It cannot be otherwise than useful to us to be impressively reminded of the simple axiom, which the perusal of this history will particularly suggest to us, that "the greatest works must have a beginning;" because the fostering of such an idea in our minds cannot but encourage us to undertake the removal of evils, however vast they may appear in their size, or however difficult to overcome. It cannot, again, be otherwise than useful to us to be assured (and this history will assure us of it) that in any work, which is a work of righteousness, however small the beginning may be, or however small the progress may be that we may make in it, we ought never to despair; for that, whatever checks and discouragements we may meet with, "no virtuous effort is ever ultimately lost." And finally, it cannot be otherwise than useful to us to form the opinion, which the contemplation of this subject must always produce, namely, that many of the evils, which are still left among us, may, by an union of wise and virtuous individuals, be greatly alleviated, if not entirely done away: for if the great evil of the Slave-trade, so deeply entrenched by its hundred interests, has fallen prostrate before the efforts of those who attacked it, what evil of a less magnitude shall not be more easily subdued? O may reflections of this sort always enliven us, always encourage us, always stimulate us to our duty! May we never cease to believe, that many of the miseries of life are still to be remedied, or to rejoice that we may be permitted, if we will only make ourselves worthy by our endeavours, to heal them!

May we encourage for this purpose every generous sympathy that arises in our hearts, as the offspring of the Divine influence for our good, convinced that we are not born for ourselves alone, and that the Divinity never so fully dwells in us, as when we do his will; and that we never do his will more agreeably, as far as it has been revealed to us, than when we employ our time in works of charity towards the rest of our fellow-creatures!



## CHAPTER II.

### *Origin of the Slave-trade, and of efforts for its suppression.*

THE Slave-trade commenced as early as the year 1503. When a few slaves were sent from the Portuguese settlements in Africa into the Spanish Colonies, in America. In 1511, Ferdinand the Fifth, king of Spain, permitted them to be carried in greater numbers.

The first importation of Slaves from Africa by the English, was in the reign of Elizabeth, in the year 1562. This great princess seems on the very commencement of the trade to have questioned its lawfulness. She seems to have entertained a religious scruple concerning it, and, indeed, to have revolted at the very thought of it. She seems to have been aware of the evils to which its continuance might lead, or that, if it were sanctioned, the most unjustifiable means might be made use of to procure the persons of the natives of Africa. And in what light she would have viewed any acts of this kind, had

they taken place, we may conjecture from this fact ; that when captain (afterwards Sir John) Hawkins returned from his first voyage to Africa and Hispaniola, whither he had carried slaves, she sent for him, and, as we learn from Hill's Naval History, expressed her concern lest any of the Africans should be carried off without their free consent, declaring that "It would be detestable, and call down the vengeance of Heaven upon the undertakers." Captain Hawkins promised to comply with the injunctions of Elizabeth in this respect. But he did not keep his word ; for when he went to Africa again, he seized many of the inhabitants, and carried them off as slaves, which occasioned Hill, in the account he gives of his second voyage, to use these remarkable words : "Here began the horrid practice of forcing the Africans into slavery, an injustice and barbarity which, so sure as there is vengeance in heaven for the worst of crimes, will sometime be the destruction of all who allow or encourage it."

Though the Slave-trade commenced so early, there were no united and effective efforts made for its abolition till the year 1787. At which period a number of persons associated themselves in England for this benevolent object. However, for a long time previous to the forming of this important association, individuals were continually rising, who, by their writings and labours, rendered valuable service to the cause of humanity, and who may properly be considered as forerunners in the great work of the Abolition, inasmuch as they prepared the way for that extensive and united effort which finally succeeded in sweeping away the abomi-

nable traffic. In giving a history of the Abolition it will be proper to notice a few of the more prominent and active of these harbingers in the great cause of humanity.

The first, whom I shall mention, is Morgan Godwyn, a clergyman of the established church. This pious divine wrote a Treatise upon the subject, which he dedicated to the then archbishop of Canterbury. He gave it to the world, at the time mentioned, under the title of "The Negroe's and Indian's Advocate." In this treatise he lays open the situation of these oppressed people, of whose sufferings he had been an eyewitness in the Island of Barbadoes. He calls forth the pity of the reader in an affecting manner, and exposes with a nervous eloquence the brutal sentiments and conduct of their oppressors. This seems to have been the first work undertaken in England expressly in favour of the cause.

The next person, whom I shall mention, is Richard Baxter, the celebrated divine among the Nonconformists. In his Christian Directory, published about the same time as the Negroe's and Indian's Advocate, he gives advice to those masters in foreign plantations, who have Negroes and other slaves. In this he protests loudly against this trade. He says expressly that they, who go out as pirates, and take away poor Africans, or people of another land, who never forfeited life or liberty, and make them slaves and sell them, are the worst of robbers, and ought to be considered as the common enemies of mankind; and that they, who buy them, and use them as mere beasts for their own convenience, *regardless of their spiritual welfare*, are fitter to

be called demons than christians. He then proposes several queries, which he answers in a clear and forcible manner, showing the great inconsistency of this traffic, and the necessity of treating those then in bondage with tenderness and a due regard to their spiritual concerns.

In the year 1696, Southern brought forward his celebrated tragedy of Oronooko, by means of which many became enlightened upon the subject, and interested in it. For this tragedy was not a representation of fictitious circumstances, but of such as had occurred in the colonies, and as had been communicated in a publication by Mrs. Behn.

The person, who seems to have noticed the subject next was Dr. Primatt. In his "Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy, and on the Sin of Cruelty to Brute-animals," he takes occasion to advert to the subject of the African Slave-trade. "It has pleased God," says he, "to cover some men with white skins, and others with black; but as there is neither merit nor demerit in complexion, the white man, notwithstanding the barbarity of custom and prejudice, can have no right by virtue of his colour to enslave and tyrannize over the black man. For whether a man be white or black, such he is by God's appointment, and, abstractedly considered, is neither a subject for pride, nor an object of contempt."

In the year 1735, Atkins who was a surgeon in the navy, published his voyage to Guinea, Brazil, and the West-Indies, in his majesty's ships Swallow and Weymouth. In this work he describes openly the manner of making the natives slaves, such as by kidnapping, by unjust accusations and trials, and by other nefarious



means. He states also the cruelties practised upon them by the white people, and the iniquitous ways and dealings of the latter, and answers their argument, by which they insinuated that the condition of the Africans was improved by their transportation to other countries.

In the year 1750 the reverend Griffith Hughes, rector of St. Lucy, in Barbadoes, published his *Natural History of that Island*. He took an opportunity, in the course of it, of laying open to the world the miserable situation of the poor Africans, and the waste of them by hard labour and other cruel means, and he had the generosity to vindicate their capacities from the charge, which they who held them in bondage brought against them, as a justification of their own wickedness in continuing to deprive them of the rights of men.

Edmund Burke, in his account of the European settlements, (for this work is usually attributed to him,) complains "that the Negroes in our colonies endure a slavery more complete, and attended with far worse circumstances, than what any people in their condition suffer in any other part of the world, or have suffered in any other period of time. Proofs of this are not wanting. The prodigious waste, which, we experience in this unhappy part of our species, is a full and melancholy evidence of this truth."

The poet Shenstone, who comes next in order, seems to have written an *Elegy* on purpose to stigmatize this trade. Of this elegy I shall copy only the following parts :

" See the poor native quit the Lybian shores,  
Ah ! not in love's delightful fetters bound !  
No radiant smile his dying peace restores,  
No love, nor fame, nor friendship heals his wound.

" Let vacant bards display their boasted woes;  
Shall I the mockery of grief display ?  
No ; let the muse his piercing pangs disclose,  
Who bleeds and weeps his sum of life away !

" On the wild heath in mournful guise he stood  
Ere the shrill boatswain gave the hated sign ;  
He dropt a tear unseen into the flood,  
He stole one secret moment to repine.

" Why am I ravish'd from my native strand ?  
What savage race protects this impious gain ?  
Shall foreign plagues infest this teeming land,  
And more than sea-born monsters plough the main ?

" Here the dire locusts' horrid swarms prevail ;  
Here the blue asps with livid poison swell ;  
Here the dry dipsa writhes his sinuous mail ;  
Can we not here secure from envy dwell ?

" When the grim lion urg'd his cruel chase,  
When the stern panther sought his midnight prey,  
What fate reserved me for this Christian race ?  
O race more polish'd, more severe, than they.

" Yet shores there are, bless'd shores for us remain,  
And favour'd isles, with golden fruitage crown'd,  
Where tufted flow'rets paint the verdant plain,  
And ev'ry breeze shall med'cine ev'ry wound."

Bishop Warburton preached a sermon in the year 1766, before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in which he took up the cause of the miserable Africans, and in which he severely reprobated their oppressors. The language in this sermon is so striking, that I shall make an extract from it. " From the free savages," says he, " I now come to the savages in bonds. By these I mean the vast multitudes yearly stolen from the opposite continent, and sacrificed by the colonists to their great idol the god of gain. But what then, say these sincere worshippers of mammon ? They are our own property which we offer up. Gracious God ! to talk, as of herds

of cattle, of property in rational creatures, creatures endued with all our faculties, possessing all our qualities but that of colour, our brethren both by nature and grace, shocks all the feelings of humanity, and the dictates of common sense ! But, alas ! what is there, in the infinite abuses of society, which does not shock them ? Yet nothing is more certain in itself and apparent to all, than that the infamous traffic for slaves directly infringes both divine and human law. Nature created man free, and grace invites him to assert his freedom."

"In excuse of this violation it hath been pretended, that though indeed these miserable outcasts of humanity be torn from their homes and native country by fraud and violence, yet they thereby become the happier, and their condition the more eligible. But who are you, who pretend to judge of another man's happiness ; that state, which each man under the guidance of his Maker forms for himself, and not one man for another ? To know what constitutes mine or your happiness is the sole prerogative of him who created us, and cast us in so various and different moulds. Did your slaves ever complain to you of their unhappiness amidst their native woods and deserts ? or rather let me ask, Did they ever cease complaining of their condition under you their lordly masters, where they see indeed the accommodations of civil life, but see them all pass to others, themselves unbenefited by them ? Be so gracious then, ye petty tyrants over human freedom, to let your slaves judge for themselves, what it is which makes their own happiness, and then see whether they do not place it in the return to their own country, rather than in the

contemplation of your grandeur, of which their misery makes so large a part; a return so passionately longed for, that, despairing of happiness here, that is, of escaping the chains of their cruel task-masters, they console themselves with feigning it to be the gracious reward of heaven in their future state."

About this time certain cruel and wicked practices which must now be mentioned, had arrived at such a height, and had become so frequent in the metropolis, as to produce of themselves other coadjutors to the cause.

Before the year 1700, planters, merchants, and others, resident in the West-Indies, but coming to England, were accustomed to bring with them certain slaves to act as servants with them during their stay. The latter, seeing the freedom and the happiness of servants in this country, and considering what would be their own hard fate on their return to the islands, frequently absconded. Their masters of course made search after them, and often had them seized and carried away by force. It was, however, thrown out by many on these occasions, that the English laws did not sanction such proceedings, for that all persons who were baptized became free. The consequence of this was, that most of the slaves, who came over with their masters prevailed upon some pious clergyman to baptize them. They took of course godfathers of such citizens as had the generosity to espouse their cause. When they were seized they usually sent to these, if they had an opportunity, for their protection. And in the result, their godfathers, maintaining that they had been baptized, and that they were free on this account as well as by

the general tenour of the laws of England, dared those, who had taken possession of them, to send them out of the kingdom.

The planters, merchants, and others, being thus circumstanced, knew not what to do. They were afraid of taking their slaves away by force and they were equally afraid of bringing any of the cases before a public court. In this dilemma, in 1729 they applied to York and Talbot the attorney and solicitor-general for the time being, and obtained the following strange opinion from them: "We are of opinion, that a slave by coming from the West-Indies into Great Britain or Ireland, either with or without his master, does not become free, and that his master's right and property in him is not thereby determined or varied, and that baptism doth not bestow freedom on him, nor make any alteration in his temporal condition in these kingdoms. We are also of opinion, that the master may legally compel him to return again to the plantations."

This cruel and illegal opinion was delivered in the year 1729. The planters, merchants, and others, gave it of course all the publicity in their power. And the consequences were, as might easily have been apprehended. In a little time slaves absconding were advertised in the London papers as runaways, and rewards offered for the apprehension of them, in the same brutal manner as we find them advertised in the land of slavery. They were advertised also, in the same papers, to be sold by auction, sometimes by themselves, and at others with horses, chaises and harness. They were seized also by their masters, or by persons employed by them, in the

very streets, and dragged from thence to the ships; and so unprotected now were these poor slaves, that persons in nowise concerned with them began to institute a trade in their persons, making agreements with captains of ships going to the West-Indies to put them on board at a certain price. This last instance shows how far human nature is capable of going, and is an answer to those persons, who have denied that kidnapping in Africa was a source of supplying the Slave-trade. It shows as all history does from the time of Joseph, that, where there is a market for the persons of human beings, all kinds of enormities will be practised to obtain them.

These circumstances then, as I observed before, did not fail of producing new coadjutors in the cause. And first they produced that able and indefatigable advocate Mr. Granville Sharp. This gentleman is to be distinguished from those who preceded him by this particular, that, whereas these were only writers, he was both a writer and an actor in the cause. In fact, he was the first labourer in it in England. By the words "actor" and "labourer," I mean that he determined upon a plan of action in behalf of the oppressed Africans, to the accomplishment of which he devoted a considerable portion of his time, talents, and substance. What Mr. Sharp has done to merit the title of coadjutor in this high sense, I shall now explain. The following is a short history of the beginning and of the course of his labours.

In the year 1765, Mr. David Lisle had brought over from Barbadoes Jonathan Strong, an African slave, as his servant. He used the latter in

a barbarous manner at his lodgings in Wapping, but particularly by beating him over the head with a pistol, which occasioned his head to swell. When the swelling went down, a disorder fell into his eyes, which threatened the loss of them. To this an ague and fever succeeded, and a lameness in both his legs.

Jonathan Strong, having been brought into this deplorable situation, and being therefore wholly useless, was left by his master to go whither he pleased. He applied accordingly to Mr. William Sharp the surgeon for his advice, as to one who gave up a portion of his time to the healing of the diseases of the poor. It was here that Mr. Granville Sharp, the brother of the former, saw him. Suffice it to say, that in process of time he was cured. During this time Mr. Granville Sharp, pitying his hard case, supplied him with money, and he afterwards got him a situation in the family of Mr. Brown, an apothecary, to carry out medicines.

In this new situation, when Strong had become healthy and robust in his appearance, his master happened to see him. The latter immediately formed the design of possessing him again. Accordingly, when he had found out his residence, he procured John Ross, keeper of the Poultry-compter, and William Miller an officer under the lord mayor, to kidnap him. This was done by sending for him to a public house in Fenchurch-street, and then seizing him. By these he was conveyed, without any warrant, to the Poultry-compter, where he was sold by his master, to John Kerr, for thirty pounds.

Strong, in this situation, sent, as was usual, to his godfathers, John London and Stephen Nail,

for their protection. They went, but were refused admittance to him. At length he sent for Mr. Granville Sharp. The latter went, but they still refused access to the prisoner. He insisted, however, upon seeing him, and charged the keeper of the prison at his peril to deliver him up till he had been carried before a magistrate.

Mr. Sharp, immediately upon this, waited upon Sir Robert Kite, the then lord mayor, and entreated him to send for Strong, and to hear his case. A day was accordingly appointed. Mr. Sharp attended, and also William M'Bean, a notary public, and David Laird, captain of the ship *Thames*, which was to have conveyed Strong to Jamaica, in behalf of the purchaser, John Kerr. A long conversation ensued, in which the opinion of York and Talbot was quoted. Mr. Sharp made his observations. Certain lawyers, who were present, seemed to be staggered at the case, but inclined rather to recommit the prisoner. The lord mayor, however, discharged Strong, as he had been taken up without a warrant.

As soon as this determination was made known, the parties began to move off. Captain Laird, however, who kept close to Strong, laid hold of him before he had quitted the room, and said aloud, "Then I now seize him as my slave." Upon this, Mr. Sharp put his hand upon Laird's shoulder, and pronounced these words: "I charge you in the name of the king, with an assault upon the person of Jonathan Strong, and all these are my witnesses." Laird was greatly intimidated by this charge, made in the presence of the lord mayor and others, and fearing a prosecution, let his prisoner go, leaving him to be conveyed away by Mr. Sharp.



Mr. Sharp, having been greatly affected by this case, and foreseeing how much he might be engaged in others of a similar nature, thought it time that the law of the land should be known upon this subject. He applied therefore to Doctor Blackstone, afterwards Judge Blackstone, for his opinion upon it. He was, however, not satisfied with it, when he received it; nor could he obtain any satisfactory answer from several other lawyers, to whom he afterwards applied. The truth is, that the opinion of York and Talbot, which had been made public and acted upon by the planters, merchants, and others, was considered of high authority, and scarcely any one dared to question the legality of it. In this situation, Mr. Sharp saw no means of help but in his own industry, and he determined immediately to give up two or three years to the study of the English law, that he might the better advocate the cause of these miserable people. The result of these studies was the publication of a book, in the year 1769, which he called "A Representation of the Injustice and dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery in England." In this work he refuted, in the clearest manner, the opinion of York and Talbot. He produced against it the opinion of the Lord Chief Justice Holt, who many years before had determined, that every slave coming into England became free. He attacked and refuted it again by a learned and laborious inquiry into all the principles of Villanage. He refuted it again, by showing it to be an axiom in the British constitution; "That every man in England was free to sue for and defend his rights, and that force could not *be used* without a legal process," leaving it to

he judges to determine, whether an African was a man. He attacked, also, the opinion of Judge Blackstone, and showed where his error lay. This valuable book, containing these and other kinds of arguments on the subject, he distributed, but particularly among the lawyers, giving them an opportunity of refuting or acknowledging the doctrines it contained.

While Mr. Sharp was engaged in this work, another case offered, in which he took a part. This was in the year 1768. Hylas, an African slave, prosecuted a person of the name of Newton for having kidnapped his wife, and sent her to the West-Indies. The result of the trial was, that damages to the amount of a shilling were given, and the defendant was bound to bring back the woman, either by the first ship, or in six months from this decision of the court.

But soon after the work just mentioned was out, and when Mr. Sharp was better prepared, a third case occurred. This happened in the year 1770. Robert Stapylton, who lived at Chelsea, in conjunction with John Malony and Edward Armstrong, two watermen, seized the person of Thomas Lewis, an African slave. in a dark night, and dragged him to a boat lying in the Thames; they then gagged him, and tied him with a cord, and rowed him down to a ship, and put him on board to be sold as a slave in Jamaica. This base action took place near the garden of Mrs. Banks, the mother of the present Sir Joseph Banks. Lewis, it appears, on being seized, screamed violently. The servants of Mrs. Banks, who heard his cries, ran to his assistance, but the boat was gone. On informing their mistress of what had happened, she

sent for Mr. Sharp, who began now to be known as the friend of the helpless Africans, and professed her willingness to incur the expense of bringing the delinquents to justice. Mr. Sharp, with some difficulty, procured a habeas corpus, in consequence of which Lewis was brought from Gravesend just as the vessel was on the point of sailing. An action was then commenced against Stapylton, who defended himself, on the plea, "That Lewis belonged to him as his slave." In the course of the trial, Mr. Dunning, who was counsel for Lewis, paid Mr. Sharp a handsome compliment, for he held in his hand Mr. Sharp's book on the injustice and dangerous tendency of tolerating slavery in England, while he was pleading; and in his address to the jury he spoke and acted thus: "I shall submit to you," says Mr. Dunning, "what my ideas are upon such evidence, reserving to myself an opportunity of discussing it more particularly, and reserving to myself a right to insist upon a position, which I will maintain (and here he held up the book to the notice of those present) in any place and in any court of the kingdom, that our laws admit of no such property."\* The result of the trial was, that the jury pronounced the plaintiff not to have been the property of the defendant, several of them crying out "No property, no property."

After this, one or two other trials came on, in which the oppressor was defeated, and several cases occurred, in which poor slaves were liberated from the holds of vessels, and other

\* It is lamentable to think, that the same Mr. Dunning, in a cause of this kind, which came on afterwards, took the opposite side of the question.

places of confinement, by the exertions of Mr. Sharp. One of these cases was singular. The vessel on board which a poor African had been dragged and confined had reached the Downs, and had actually got under weigh for the West-Indies. In two or three hours she would have been out of sight; but just at this critical moment the writ of habeas corpus was carried on board. The officer, who served it on the captain, saw the miserable African chained to the mainmast, bathed in tears, and casting a last mournful look on the land of freedom, which was fast receding from his sight. The captain, on receiving the writ, became outrageous; but, knowing the serious consequences of resisting the law of the land, he gave up his prisoner, whom the officer carried safe, but now crying for joy, to the shore.

But though the injured Africans, whose causes had been tried, escaped slavery, and though many, who had been forcibly carried into dungeons, ready to be transported into the Colonies, had been delivered out of them, Mr. Sharp was not easy in his mind. Not one of the cases had yet been pleaded on the broad ground, "Whether an African slave coming into England became free?" This great question had been hitherto studiously avoided. It was still, therefore, left in doubt. Mr. Sharp was almost daily acting as if it had been determined, and as if he had been following the known law of the land. He wished therefore that the next cause might be argued upon this principle. Lord Mansfield too, who had been biassed by the opinion of York and Talbot, began to waver in consequence of the different pleadings he had heard on this sub-

ject. He saw also no end of trials like these, till the law should be ascertained, and he was anxious for a decision on the same basis as Mr. Sharp. In this situation the following case offered, which was agreed upon for the determination of this important question.

James Somerset, an African slave, had been brought to England by his master, Charles Stewart, in November 1769. Somerset, in process of time, left him. Stewart took an opportunity of seizing him, and had him conveyed on board the *Ann and Mary*, captain Knowles, to be carried out of the kingdom, and sold as a slave in Jamaica. The question was, "Whether a slave, by coming into England, became free?"

In order that time might be given for ascertaining the law fully on this head, the case was argued at three different sittings. First, in January, 1772; secondly, in February, 1772; and thirdly, in May, 1772. And that no decision otherwise than what the law warranted might be given, the opinion of the Judges was taken upon the pleadings. The great and glorious result of the trial was, That as soon as ever any slave set his foot upon English territory, he became free.

Thus ended the great case of Somerset, which, having been determined after so deliberate an investigation of the law, can never be reversed while the British Constitution remains. The eloquence displayed in it by those who were engaged on the side of liberty, was perhaps never exceeded on any occasion; and the names of the counsellors Davy, Glynn, Hargrave, Mansfield, and Alleyne, ought always to be remembered with gratitude by the friends of

this great cause. For when we consider in how many crowded courts they pleaded, and the number of individuals in these, whose minds they enlightened, and whose hearts they interested in the subject, they are certainly to be put down as no small instruments in the promotion of it: but chiefly to him, under Divine Providence, are we to give the praise, who became the first great actor in it, who devoted his time, his talents, and his substance to this Christian undertaking, and by whose laborious researches the very pleaders themselves were instructed and benefited. By means of his almost incessant vigilance and attention, and unwearied efforts, the poor African ceased to be hunted in our streets as a beast of prey. Miserable as the roof might be, under which he slept, he slept in security. He walked by the side of the stately ship, and he feared no dungeon in her hold. Nor ought we, as Englishmen, to be less grateful to this distinguished individual than the African ought to be upon this occasion. To him we owe it, that we no longer see our public papers polluted by hateful advertisements of the sale of the human species, or that we are no longer distressed by the perusal of impious rewards for bringing back the poor and the helpless into slavery, or that we are prohibited the disgusting spectacle of seeing man bought by his fellow-man. To him, in short, we owe this restoration of the beauty of our constitution; this prevention of the continuance of our national disgrace.

I shall say but little more of Mr. Sharp at present, than that he felt it his duty, immediately after the trial, to write to Lord North, then

principal minister of state, warning him, in the most earnest manner, to abolish immediately both the trade and the slavery of the human species in all the British dominions, as utterly irreconcilable with the principles of the British constitution, and the established religion of the land.

In the year 1774, John Wesley, the celebrated divine, to whose pious labours the religious world will be long indebted, undertook the cause of the poor Africans. He had been in America, and had seen and pitied their hard condition. The work which he gave to the world in consequence, was entitled *Thoughts on Slavery*. Mr. Wesley had this great cause much at heart, and frequently recommended it to the support of those who attended his useful ministry.

In the year 1776, the abbé Proyart brought out, at Paris, his *History of Loango*, and other kingdoms in Africa, in which he did ample justice to the moral and intellectual character of the natives there.

The same year produced two new friends in England, in the same cause, but in a line in which no one had yet moved. David Hartley, then a member of parliament for Hull, and the son of Dr. Hartley who wrote the *Essay on Man*, found it impossible any longer to pass over without notice the case of the oppressed Africans. He had long felt for their wretched condition, and, availing himself of his legislative situation, he made a motion in the house of commons, "That the Slave-trade was contrary to the laws of God, and the rights of men." In order that he might interest the members as much as possible in his motion, he had previously obtained

some of the chains in use in this cruel traffic, and had laid them upon the table of the house of commons. His motion was seconded by that great patriot and philanthropist, Sir George Saville. But though I am now to state that it failed, I cannot but consider it as a matter of pleasing reflection, that this great subject was first introduced into parliament by those who were worthy of it; by those who had clean hands and irreproachable characters, and to whom no motive of party or faction could be imputed, but only such as must have arisen from a love of justice, a true feeling of humanity and a proper sense of religion.

Dr. Adam Smith, in his *Theory of moral Sentiments*, had, so early as the year 1759, held them up in an honourable, and their tyrants in a degrading light. "There is not a Negro from the coast of Africa, who does not, in this respect, possess a degree of magnanimity, which the soul of his sordid master is too often scarce capable of conceiving. Fortune never exerted more cruelly her empire over mankind, than when she subjected those nations of heroes to the refuse of the gaols of Europe, to wretches who possess the virtue neither of the countries they came from, nor of those they go to, and whose levity, brutality, and baseness so justly expose them to the contempt of the vanquished." And now, in 1776, in his *Wealth of Nations*, he showed in a forcible manner (for he appealed to the interest of those concerned) the dearness of African labour, or the impolicy of employing slaves.

In the year 1783, we find Mr. Sharp coming again into notice. We find him at this time taking a part in a cause, the knowledge of which,



in proportion as it was disseminated, produced an earnest desire among all disinterested persons for the abolition of the Slave-trade.

In this year, certain underwriters desired to be heard against Gregson and others of Liverpool, in the case of the ship *Zong*, captain Collingwood, alleging that the captain and officers of the said vessel threw overboard one hundred and thirty-two slaves alive into the sea, in order to defraud them, by claiming the value of the said slaves, as if they had been lost in a natural way. In the course of the trial, which afterwards came on, it appeared, that the slaves on board the *Zong* were very sickly; that sixty of them had already died; and several were ill and likely to die; when the captain proposed to James Kelsall, the mate, and others, to throw several of them overboard, stating "that if they died a natural death, the loss would fall upon the owners of the ship, but that, if they were thrown into the sea, it would fall upon the underwriters." He selected accordingly one hundred and thirty-two of the most sickly of the slaves. Fifty-four of these were immediately thrown overboard, and forty-two were made to be partakers of their fate on the succeeding day. In the course of three days afterwards the remaining twenty-six were brought upon deck to complete the number of victims. The first sixteen submitted to be thrown into the sea; but the rest with a noble resolution would not suffer the officers to touch them, but leaped after their companions and shared their fate.

The plea which was set up in behalf of this atrocious and unparalleled act of wickedness, was, that the captain discovered, when he made

the proposal, that he had only two hundred gallons of water on board, and that he had missed his port. It was proved, however, in answer to this, that no one had been put upon short allowance; and that, as if Providence had determined to afford an unequivocal proof of the guilt, a shower of rain fell and continued for three days immediately after the second lot of slaves had been destroyed, by means of which they might have filled many of their vessels\* with water, and thus have prevented all necessity for the destruction of the third.

Mr. Sharp was present at this trial, and procured the attendance of a short-hand writer to take down the facts, which should come out in the course of it. These he gave to the public afterwards. He communicated them also, with a copy of the trial, to the Lords of the Admiralty, as the guardians of justice upon the seas, and to the Duke of Portland, as principal minister of state. No notice, however, was taken by any of these, of the information which had been thus sent them.

But though nothing was done by the persons then in power, in consequence of the murder of so many innocent individuals, yet the publication of an account of it by Mr. Sharp in the newspapers, made such an impression upon others, that new coadjutors rose up.

In the year 1784, Dr. Gregory produced his *Essays Historical and Moral*. He took an opportunity of disseminating in these a circumstantial knowledge of the Slave-trade, and an equal abhorrence of it at the same time. He

\*It appeared that they filled six.

explained the manner of procuring slaves in Africa; the treatment of them in the passage, (in which he mentioned the case of the ship *Zong*,) and the wicked and cruel treatment of them in the colonies. He recited and refuted also the various arguments adduced in defence of the trade. He showed that it was destructive to our seamen. He produced many weighty arguments also against the slavery itself. He proposed clauses for an act of parliament for the abolition of both; showing the good both to England and her colonies from such a measure, and that a trade might be substituted in Africa, in various articles, for that which he proposed to suppress. By means of the diffusion of light like this, both of a moral and political nature, Dr. Gregory is entitled to be ranked among the benefactors to the African race.

In the same year, James Ramsay, vicar of Teston in Kent, became also an able, zealous, and indefatigable patron of the African cause. This gentleman had resided nineteen years in the island of St. Christopher, where he had observed the treatment of the slaves, and had studied the laws relating to them. On his return to England, yielding to his own feelings of duty and the solicitations of some amiable friends, he published a work, which he called *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of the African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies*. After having given an account of the relative situation of master and slave in various parts of the world, he explained the low and degrading situation which the Africans held in society in our own islands. He showed that their importance would be increased, and the temporal interest of their

masters promoted, by giving them freedom. and by granting them other privileges. He showed the great difficulty of instructing them in the state in which they then were. and such as he himself had experienced both in his private and public attempts, and such as others had experienced also. He stated the way in which private attempts of this nature might probably be successful. He then answered all objections against their capacities, as drawn from philosophy, form, anatomy, and observation ; and vindicated these from his own experience. And lastly. he threw out ideas for the improvement of their condition, by an establishment of a greater number of spiritual pastors among them ; by giving them more privileges than they then possessed ; and by extending towards them the benefits of a proper police. Mr. Ramsay had no other motive for giving this work to the public, than that of humanity, or a wish to serve this much injured part of the human species. For he compiled it at the hazard of forfeiting that friendship, which he had contracted with many during his residence in the islands, and of suffering much in his private property, as well as subjecting himself to the ill-will and persecution of numerous individuals.

The publication of this book by one, who professed to have been so long resident in the islands, and to have been an eyewitness of facts, produced, as may easily be supposed, a good deal of conversation, and made a considerable impression, but particularly at this time, when a storm was visibly gathering over the heads of the oppressors of the African race.

In the year 1785, another advocate was seen

in Monsieur Necker, in his celebrated work on the French Finances, which had just been translated into the English language from the original work, in 1784. This virtuous statesman, after having given his estimate of the population and revenue of the French West-Indian colonies, proceeds thus: "The colonies of France contain, as we have seen, near five hundred thousand slaves, and it is from the number of these poor wretches that the inhabitants set a value on their plantations. What a dreadful prospect! and how profound a subject for reflection! Alas! how little are we both in our morality and our principles! We preach up humanity, and yet go every year to bind in chains twenty thousand natives of Africa? We call the Moors barbarians and ruffians, because they attack the liberty of Europeans at the risk of their own; yet these Europeans go, without danger, and as mere speculators, to purchase slaves by gratifying the avarice of their masters, and excite all those bloody scenes, which are the usual preliminaries of this traffic!" He goes on still further in the same strain. He then shows the kind of power which has supported this execrable trade. He throws out the idea of a general compact, by which all the European nations should agree to abolish it. And he indulges the pleasing hope, that it may take place even in the present generation.

In the same year we find other coadjutors coming before our view, but these in a line different from that, in which any other belonging to this class had yet moved. Mr. George White, a clergyman of the established church, and Mr. John Chubb, suggested to Mr. William Tuckey,

the mayor of Bridgewater, where they resided, and to others of that town, the propriety of petitioning parliament for the abolition of the Slave-trade. This petition was agreed upon, and when drawn up, was as follows :

“ The humble petition of the inhabitants of Bridgewater sheweth,

“ That your petitioners, reflecting with the deepest sensibility on the deplorable condition of that part of the human species, the African Negroes, who by the most flagitious means are reduced to slavery and misery in the British colonies, beg leave to address this honourable house in their behalf, and to express a just abhorrence of a system of oppression, which no prospect of private gain, no consideration of public advantage, no plea of political expediency, can sufficiently justify or excuse.

“ That, satisfied as your petitioners are that this inhuman system meets with the general execration of mankind, they flatter themselves the day is not far distant when it will be universally abolished. And they most ardently hope to see a British parliament, by the extinction of that sanguinary traffic, extend the blessings of liberty to millions beyond this realm, hold up to an enlightened world a glorious and merciful example, and stand foremost in the defence of the violated rights of human nature.”

This petition was presented by the honourable Ann Poulet, and Alexander Hood, Esq. (now lord Bridport,) who were the members for the town of Bridgewater. It was ordered to lie on the table. The answer which these gentlemen gave to their constituents relative to the reception of it in the house of commons, is worthy

of notice : " There did not appear," say they in their common letter, " the least disposition to pay any further attention to it. Every one almost says, that the abolition of the Slave-trade must immediately throw the West-Indian islands into convulsions, and soon complete their utter ruin. Thus they will not trust Providence for its protection for so pious an undertaking."

Amongst others, the amiable and gifted Cowper did not fail to utter his sentiments in regard to the cruel system. Who has not been impressed by the following lines.

" My ear is pain'd,  
My soul is sick with every day's report  
Of wrong and outrage with which this earth is fill'd.  
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,  
It does not feel for man. The nat'ral bond  
Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax  
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.  
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin  
Not colour'd like his own, and having pow'r  
To inforce the wrong for such a worthy cause  
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.  
Lands intersected by a narrow frith  
Abhor each other. Mountains interpos'd,  
Make enemies of nations, who had else,  
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one.  
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys ;  
And, worse than all, and most to be deplor'd  
As human Nature's broadest, foulest blot,  
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat  
With stripes, that mercy with a bleeding heart  
Weeps, when she sees inflicted on a beast.  
Then what is man ? And what man, seeing this,  
And having human feelings, does not blush,  
And hang his head to think himself a man ?  
I would not have a slave to till my ground,  
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,  
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth  
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.  
No : dear as freedom is, and in my heart's  
Just estimation priz'd above all price,  
I had much rather be myself the slave,  
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.

We have no slaves at home....then why abroad ?  
 And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave  
 That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.  
 Slaves cannot breathe in England ; if their lungs  
 Receive our air, that moment they are free ;  
 They touch our country. and their shackles fall.\*  
 That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud  
 And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,  
 And let it circulate through every vein  
 Of all your empire....that where Britain's pow'r  
 Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too."

### CHAPTER III.

#### *Forerunners continued.—Measures of the Quakers.*

GEORGE FOX, the venerable founder of the Society of the Quakers, took strong and decided ground against the Slave-trade. He was contemporary with Richard Baxter, being born not long after him, and dying much about the same time. Like him, he left his testimony against this wicked trade. When he was in the island of Barbadoes, in the year 1671, he delivered himself to those who attended his religious meetings in the following manner :

"Consider with yourselves," says he, "if you were in the same condition as the poor Africans are, who came strangers to you, and were sold to you as slaves ; I say, if this should be the condition of you or yours, you would think it a hard measure ; yea, and very great bondage and cruelty. And therefore consider seriously of this ; and do you for them, and to them, as you would willingly have them, or any others do

\* Expressions used in the great trial, when Mr. Sharp obtained the verdict in favour of Somerset.



unto you, were you in the like slavish condition and bring them to know the Lord Christ."

In the year 1727, we find that the whole Society at a yearly meeting held in London adopted the following Resolution. "It is the sense of this meeting, that the importing of Negroes from their native country and relation by Friends, is not a commendable nor allowable practice, and is therefore censured by this meeting."

In the year 1758 the Quakers thought it their duty, as a body, to pass another Resolution upon this subject. At this time the nature of the trade beginning to be better known, we find them more animated upon it, as the following extract will show :

"We fervently warn all in profession with us that they carefully avoid being any way concerned in reaping the unrighteous profits arising from the iniquitous practice of dealing in Negro and other slaves; whereby, in the original purchase one man selleth another, as he doth the beast that perish, without any better pretension to property in him than that of superiour force; a direct violation of the Gospel rule, which teacheth all to do as they would be done by, and to do good to all; being the reverse of that covetous disposition, which furnisheth encouragement to those poor ignorant people to perpetuate the savage wars, in order to supply the demands of this most unnatural traffic, by which great numbers of mankind, free by nature, are subject to inextricable bondage; and which hath often been observed to fill their possessors with haughtiness, tyranny, luxury, and barbarity, corrupting their minds and debasing the morals of their children."

to the unspeakable prejudice of religion and virtue, and the exclusion of that holy spirit of universal love, meekness, and charity, which is the unchangeable nature and the glory of true Christianity. We therefore can do no less than, with the greatest earnestness, impress it upon Friends every where, that they endeavour to keep their hands clear of this unrighteous gain of oppression."

At the yearly meeting of 1761, they agreed to exclude from membership such as should be found concerned in this trade; and in the meeting of 1763, they endeavoured to draw the cords still tighter, by attaching criminality to those, who should aid and abet the trade in any manner.

The Society was now ready to make an appeal to others, and to bear a more public testimony in favour of the injured Africans. Accordingly, in the month of June 1783, when a bill had been brought into the House of Commons for certain regulations to be made with respect to the African trade, the Society sent the following petition to that branch of the legislature:

"Your petitioners, met in this their annual assembly, having solemnly considered the state of the enslaved Negroes, conceive themselves engaged, in religious duty, to lay the suffering situation of that unhappy people before you, as a subject loudly calling for the humane interposition of the legislature.

"Your petitioners regret that a nation, professing the Christian faith, should so far counteract the principles of humanity and justice, as by the cruel treatment of this oppressed race to

fill their minds with prejudices against the mild and beneficent doctrines of the Gospel.

“Under the countenance of the laws of this country many thousands of these our fellow-creatures, entitled to the natural rights of mankind, are held as personal property in cruel bondage; and your petitioners being informed that a Bill for the Regulation of the African Trade is now before the House, containing a clause which restrains the officers of the African Company from exporting Negroes, your petitioners, deeply affected with a consideration of the rapine, oppression, and bloodshed, attending this traffic, humbly request that this restriction may be extended to all persons whomsoever, or that the House would grant such other relief in the premises as in its wisdom may seem meet.”

This petition was presented by Sir Cecil Wray, who, on introducing it, spoke very respectfully of the Society. He declared his hearty approbation of their application, and said he hoped he should see the day when not a slave would remain within the dominions of this realm. Lord North seconded the motion, saying he could have no objection to the petition, and that its object ought to recommend it to every humane breast; that it did credit to the most benevolent society in the world; but that, the session being so far advanced, the subject could not then be taken into consideration; and he regretted that the Slave-trade, against which the petition was so justly directed, was in a commercial view become necessary to almost every nation of Europe. The petition was then brought up and read, after which it was ordered to lie on the table. This was the first petition (being two years earlier

than that from the inhabitants of Bridgewater,) which was ever presented to parliament for the abolition of the Slave-trade.

In this same year 1783, an event occurred, which will be found of great importance in the present history, and in which only individuals belonging to this Society were concerned. This event seems to have arisen naturally out of existing or past circumstances. For the Society, as I have before stated, had sent a petition to Parliament in this year, praying for the abolition of the Slave-trade. It had also laid the foundation for a public distribution of books, which had been published, with a view of enlightening others on this great subject. The case of the ship *Zong*, which I have before had occasion to explain, had occurred this same year. A letter also had been presented, much about the same time, by Benjamin West, from Anthony Benezet, in America, to our Queen, in behalf of the injured Africans, which she had received graciously. These subjects occupied at this time the attention of many Quaker families, and among others, that of a few individuals, who were in close intimacy with each other. These, when they met together frequently conversed upon them. They perceived, as facts came out in conversation, that there was a growing knowledge and hatred of the Slave-trade, and that the temper of the times was ripening towards its abolition. Hence a disposition manifested itself among these, to unite as labourers for the furtherance of so desirable an object. An union was at length proposed and approved of, and the following persons (placed in alphabetical order)

came together to execute the offices growing out of it:

William Dillwyn,	Thomas Knowles, M. D.
George Harrison,	John Lloyd,
Samuel Hoare,	Joseph Woods.

The first meeting was held on the seventh of July, 1783. At this "they assembled to consider what steps they should take for the relief and liberation of the Negro slaves in the West-Indies, and for the discouragement of the Slave-trade on the coast of Africa."

To promote this object they conceived it necessary that the public mind should be enlightened respecting it. They had recourse therefore to the public papers, and they appointed their members in turn to write in these, and to see that their productions were inserted. They kept regular minutes for this purpose. It was not however known to the world that such an association existed.

I shall take my leave of it, simply remarking, that it was the first ever formed in England for the promotion of the abolition of the Slave-trade,

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## CHAPTER IV.

### *Preparative Measures of Quakers and others in America.*

THE Quakers in America early manifested a deep and compassionate feeling toward the afflicted African.

It is true, that at first, they with others became the owners of Slaves, the manner in which they were procured not being at that time gen-

erally known. Most of them, however, treated their Slaves with great kindness. But notwithstanding their mildness toward them, and the consequent content of their Slaves, some of the Society soon began to entertain doubts, in regard to the lawfulness of holding the Negroes in bondage at all.

So early as in the year 1688, some emigrants from Krieshiem in Germany, who had adopted the principles of William Penn, and followed him into Pennsylvania, urged in the yearly meeting of the Society there, the inconsistency of buying, selling, and holding men in slavery, with the principles of the Christian religion.

In the year 1696, the yearly meeting for that province, took up the subject as a public concern, and, the result was advice to the members of it to guard against future importations of African slaves, and to be particularly attentive to the treatment of those, who were then in their possession.

In the year 1711, the same yearly meeting resumed the important subject, and confirmed and renewed the advice, which had been before given.

In the year 1754, the same meeting issued a pertinent and truly Christian letter to all the members within its jurisdiction. This letter contained exhortations to all in the connexion to desist from purchasing, and importing slaves, and, where they possessed them, to have a tender consideration of their condition. But that the first part of the subject of this exhortation might be enforced, the yearly meeting for the same provinces came to a resolution in 1755, That if any of the members belonging to it

bought or imported slaves, the overseers were to inform their respective monthly meetings of that "these might treat with them, as they might be directed in the wisdom of truth."

In the year 1776, the same yearly meeting carried the matter still further. It was then acted, That the owners of slaves, who refused to execute proper instruments for giving them their freedom, were to be disowned likewise.

In 1778 it was enacted by the same meeting That the children of those, who had been freed by members, should be tenderly advised and have a suitable education given them.

Whilst the body were thus decisive in their measures, individuals of the Society were zealous and devoted in their endeavours to promote the same humane cause. Amongst these Anthony Benezet stands conspicuous. This distinguished philanthropist was born at St. Quintin, in Picardy, of a respectable family, in the year 1718. His father was one of the many protestants, who, in consequence of the persecutions which followed the revocation of the edict of Nantz, sought asylum in foreign countries. After a short stay in Holland, he settled, with his wife and children in London, in 1715.

Anthony Benezet, having received from his father a liberal education, served an apprenticeship in an eminent mercantile house in London. In 1731, however, he removed with his family to Philadelphia, where he joined in profession with the Quakers. His three brothers then engaged in trade, and made considerable pecuniary acquisitions in it. He himself might have partaken both of their concerns and of their prosperity; but he did not feel himself at liberty

embark in their undertakings. He considered the accumulation of wealth as of no importance, when compared with the enjoyment of doing good; and he chose the humble situation of a schoolmaster, as according best with this notion, believing, that by endeavouring to train up youth in knowledge and virtue, he should become more extensively useful than in any other way to his fellow-creatures.

He had not been long in his new situation, before he manifested such an uprightness of conduct, such a courtesy of manners, such a purity of intention, and such a spirit of benevolence, that he attracted the notice, and gained the good opinion, of the inhabitants among whom he lived. He had ready access to them, in consequence, upon all occasions; and, if there were any whom he failed to influence at any of these times, he never went away without the possession of their respect.

In the year 1756, when a considerable number of French families were removed from Acadia into Pennsylvania, on account of some political suspicions, he felt deeply interested about them. In a country where few understood their language, they were wretched and helpless; but Anthony Benezet endeavoured to soften the rigour of their situation, by his kind attention towards them. He exerted himself also in their behalf, by procuring many contributions for them, which, by the consent of his fellow-citizens, were entrusted to his care.

One of the means which Anthony Benezet took to promote the cause in question, (and an effectual one it proved, as far as it went) was to give his scholars a due knowledge and proper



impressions concerning it. Situated as they were likely to be, in afterlife, in a country where slavery was a custom, he thus prepared many, and this annually, for the promotion of his plans.

To enlighten others, and to give them a similar bias, he had recourse to different measures from time to time. In the almanacs published annually in Philadelphia, he procured articles to be inserted, which he believed would attract the notice of the reader, and make him pause, at least for a while, as to the lawfulness of the Slave-trade. He wrote, also, as he saw occasion, in the public papers of the day. From small things he proceeded to greater. He collected, at length, further information on the subject, and, winding it up with observations and reflections, he produced several little tracts, which he circulated successively (but generally at his own expense) as he considered them adapted to the temper and circumstances of the times.

In the course of this his employment, having found some who had approved his tracts and to whom, on that account, he wished to write, and sending his tracts to others, to whom he thought it proper to introduce them by letter, he found himself engaged in a correspondence, which much engrossed his time, but which proved of great importance in procuring many advocates for his cause.

In the year 1762, when he had obtained a still greater store of information, he published a larger work. This, however, he entitled, *A short Account of that Part of Africa inhabited by the Negroes*. In 1767 he published, *A Caution and Warning to Great-Britain and her Col-*

onies, on the Calamitous State of the enslaved Negroes in the British Dominions: and soon after this, appeared, A Historical Account of Guinea, its Situation, Produce, and the General Disposition of its Inhabitants; with an Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Slave-trade, its Nature, and Calamitous Effects. This pamphlet contained a clear and distinct development of the subject, from the best authorities. It contained also the sentiments of many enlightened men upon it; and it became instrumental, beyond any other book ever before published, in disseminating a proper knowledge and detestation of this trade.

Anthony Benezet may be considered as one of the most zealous, vigilant, and active advocates, which the cause of the oppressed Africans ever had. He seemed to have been born and to have lived for the promotion of it, and therefore he never omitted any the least opportunity of serving it. If a person called upon him who was going a journey, his first thoughts usually were, how he could make him an instrument in its favour; and he either gave him tracts to distribute, or he sent letters by him, or he gave him some commission on the subject, so that he was the means of employing several persons at the same time, in various parts of America, in advancing the work he had undertaken.

In the same manner he availed himself of every other circumstance, as far as he could, to the same end. When he heard that Mr. Granvill Sharp had obtained, in the year 1772, the noble verdict in the cause of Somerset the slave, he opened a correspondence with him, which he kept up, that there might be an union of action

between them for the future, as far as it could be effected, and that they might each give encouragement to the other to proceed.

He wrote also a letter to the Countess of Huntingdon on the following subject. She had founded a college, at the recommendation of George Whitefield, called the Orphan-house, near Savannah, in Georgia, and had endowed it. The object of this institution was, to furnish scholastic instruction to the poor, and to prepare some of them for the ministry. George Whitefield, ever attentive to the cause of the poor Africans, thought that this institution might have been useful to them also; but soon after his death, they who succeeded him bought slaves, and these in unusual numbers, to extend the rice and indigo plantations belonging to the college. The letter then in question was written by Anthony Benezet, in order to lay before the Countess, as a religious woman, the misery she was occasioning in Africa, by allowing the managers of her college in Georgia to give encouragement to the Slave-trade. The Countess replied, that such a measure should never have her countenance, and that she would take care to prevent it.

On discovering that the Abbé Raynal had brought out his celebrated work, in which he manifested a tender feeling in behalf of the injured Africans, he entered into a correspondence with him, hoping to make him yet more useful to their cause.

Finding, also, in the year 1783, that the Slave-trade, which had greatly declined during the American war, was reviving, he addressed a pathetic letter to our Queen, (as I mentioned in *the last chapter*,) who, on hearing the high char-

acter of the writer of it from Benjamin West, received it with marks of peculiar condescension and attention. The following is a copy of it.

*“ To Charlotte, Queen of Great-Britain.*

“ IMPRESSED with a sense of religious duty, and encouraged by the opinion generally entertained of thy benevolent disposition to succour the distressed, I take the liberty, very respectfully, to offer to thy perusal some tracts, which, I believe faithfully describe the suffering condition of many hundred thousands of our fellow-creatures of the African race, great numbers of whom, rent from every tender connexion in life, are annually taken from their native land, to endure, in the American islands and plantations, a most rigorous and cruel slavery; whereby many, very many of them, are brought to a melancholy and untimely end.

“ When it is considered that the inhabitants of Great-Britain, who are themselves so eminently blessed in the enjoyment of religious and civil liberty, have long been, and yet are, very deeply concerned in this flagrant violation of the common rights of mankind, and that even its national authority is exerted in support of the African Slave-trade, there is much reason to apprehend, that this has been, and, as long as the evil exists, will continue to be, an occasion of drawing down the Divine displeasure on the nation and its dependencies. May these considerations induce thee to interpose thy kind endeavours in behalf of this greatly injured people, whose abject situation gives them an additional claim to the pity and assistance of the generous mind, inasmuch

as they are altogether deprived of the means of soliciting effectual relief for themselves; that so thou mayest not only be a blessed instrument in the hand of Him 'by whom kings reign and princes decree justice,' to avert the awful judgments by which the empire has already been so remarkably shaken, but that the blessings of thousands ready to perish may come upon thee, at a time when the superiour advantages attendant on thy situation in this world will no longer be of any avail to thy consolation and support.

"To the tracts on this subject to which I have thus ventured to crave thy particular attention, I have added some which at different times I have believed it my duty to publish,\* and which, I trust, will afford thee some satisfaction, their design being for the furtherance of that universal peace and good-will amongst men, which the gospel was intended to introduce.

"I hope thou wilt kindly excuse the freedom used on this occasion by an ancient man, whose mind, for more than forty years past, has been much separated from the common intercourse of the world, and long painfully exercised in the consideration of the miseries under which so large a part of mankind, equally with us the objects of redeeming love, are suffering the most unjust and grievous oppression, and who sincerely desires thy temporal and eternal felicity, and that of thy royal consort.

ANTHONY BENEZET."

Anthony Benezet, besides the care he bestowed upon forwarding the cause of the oppressed

\* These related to the principles of the religious society of the Quakers.

Africans in different parts of the world, found time to promote the comforts and improve the condition of those in the State in which he lived. Apprehending that much advantage would arise both to them and the public, from instructing them in common learning, he zealously promoted the establishment of a school for that purpose. Much of the two last years of his life he devoted to a personal attendance on this school, being earnestly desirous that they who came to it might be better qualified for the enjoyment of that freedom to which great numbers of them had been then restored. To this he sacrificed the superiour emoluments of his former school, and his bodily ease also, although the weakness of his constitution seemed to demand indulgence. By his last will he directed, that, after the decease of his widow, his whole little fortune (the savings of the industry of fifty years) should, except a few very small legacies, be applied to the support of it. During his attendance upon it he had the happiness to find, (and his situation enabled him to make the comparison,) that Providence had been equally liberal to the Africans in genius and talents as to other people.

After a few days illness this excellent man died at Philadelphia in the spring of 1784. The interment of his remains was attended by several thousands of all ranks, professions, and parties, who united in deploring their loss. The mournful procession was closed by some hundreds of those poor Africans, who had been personally benefited by his labours, and whose behaviour on the occasion, showed the gratitude and affection they considered to be due to him

as their own private benefactor, as well as the benefactor of their whole race.

Others in America, beside the Quakers, early took the part of the oppressed Africans. In the first part of the eighteenth century, Judge Sewall, of New-England, came forward as a zealous advocate for them. He addressed a memorial to the legislature, which he called *The Selling of Joseph*, and in which he pleaded their cause both as a lawyer and a Christian. This memorial produced an effect upon many, but particularly upon those of his own persuasion; and from this time the presbyterians appear to have encouraged a sympathy in their favour.

In the year 1739, the celebrated George Whitefield became an instrument in turning the attention of many others to their hard case, and of begetting in these a fellow-sympathy towards them. This laborious minister, having been deeply affected with what he had seen in the course of his religious travels in America, thought it his duty to address a letter from Georgia to the inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina. This letter was printed in the year above mentioned, and is in part as follows:

“As I lately passed through your provinces in my way hither, I was sensibly touched with a fellow-feeling for the miseries of the poor Negroes. Whether it be lawful for Christians to buy slaves, and thereby encourage the nations from whom they are bought to be at perpetual war with each other, I shall not take upon me to determine. Sure I am it is sinful, when they have bought them, to use them as bad as though they were brutes, nay worse; and whatever par-

ticular exceptions there may be (as I would charitably hope there are some) I fear the generality of you, who own Negroes, are liable to such a charge; for your slaves, I believe, work as hard, if not harder than the horses whereon you ride. These, after they have done their work, are fed and taken proper care of; but many Negroes when wearied with labour in your plantations, have been obliged to grind their corn after their return home. Your dogs are caressed and fondled at your table; but your slaves, who are frequently called dogs or beasts, have not an equal privilege. They are scarce permitted to pick up the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Not to mention what numbers have been given up to the inhuman usage of cruel task-masters who, by their unrelenting scourges have ploughed their backs, and made long furrows, and at length brought them even unto death. When passing along I have viewed your plantations cleared and cultivated, many spacious houses built, and the owners of them faring sumptuously every day, my blood has frequently almost run cold within me, to consider how many of your slaves had neither convenient food to eat nor proper raiment to put on, notwithstanding most of the comforts you enjoy were solely owing to their indefatigable labours."

The letter, from which this is an extract, produced a desirable effect upon many of those, who perused it, but particularly upon such as began to be seriously disposed in these times. And as George Whitefield continued a firm friend to the poor Africans, never losing an opportunity of serving them, he interested, in the course of his



useful life, many thousands of his followers in their favour.

In the year 1772, a disposition favourable to the oppressed Africans became very generally manifest in some of the American Provinces. The house of burgesses of Virginia even presented a petition to the King, beseeching his majesty to remove all those restraints on his governours of that colony, which inhibited their assent to such laws, as might check that inhuman and impolitic commerce, the Slave-trade: and it is remarkable, that the refusal of the British government to permit the Virginians to exclude slaves from among them by law, was enumerated afterwards among the public reasons for separating from the mother country.

But this friendly disposition was greatly increased in the year 1773, by the literary labours of Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia,\* who, I believe, is a member of the presbyterian church. For in this year, at the instigation of Anthony Benezet, he took up the cause of the oppressed Africans in a little work, which he entitled, *An Address to the Inhabitants of the British Settlements on the Slavery of the Negroes*; and soon afterwards in another, which was a vindication of the first, in answer to an acrimonious attack by a West-Indian planter. These publications contained many new observations. They were written in a polished style; and while they exhibited the erudition and talents, they showed the liberality and benevolence, of the author. Having had a considerable circulation, they

\* Dr. Rush has been better known since for his other literary works; such as his *Medical Dissertations*, his *Treatises on the Discipline of Schools*, *Criminal Law*, &c.

spread conviction among many, and promoted the cause for which they had been so laudably undertaken.

But in the next year, or in the year 1774,\* the increased good-will towards the Africans became so apparent, but more particularly in Pennsylvania, where the Quakers were more numerous than in any other state, that they, who considered themselves more immediately as the friends of these injured people, thought it right to avail themselves of it: and accordingly James Pemberton, one of the most conspicuous of the Quakers in Pennsylvania, and Dr. Rush, one of the most conspicuous of those belonging to the various other religious communities in that province, undertook, in conjunction with others, the important task of bringing those into a society who were friendly to this cause. In this undertaking they succeeded. This society, which was confined to Pennsylvania, was the first ever formed in America, in which there was an union of persons of different religious denominations in behalf of the African race.

But this society had scarcely begun to act, when the war broke out between England and America, which had the effect of checking its operations. This was considered as a severe blow upon it. But as those things which appear most to our disadvantage, turn out often the most to our benefit, so the war, by giving birth to the independence of America, was ultimately favourable to its progress. For as this contest

\* In this year, Elhanan Winchester, a supporter of the doctrine of universal redemption, turned the attention of many of his hearers to this subject; both by private interference and by preaching expressly upon it.

had produced during its continuance, so it left, when it was over, a general enthusiasm for liberty. Many talked of little else but of the freedom they had gained. These were naturally led to the consideration of those among them, who were groaning in bondage. They began to feel for their hard case. They began to think that they should not deserve the new blessing which they had acquired, if they denied it to others. Thus the discussions, which originated in this contest, became the occasion of turning the attention of many, who might not otherwise have thought of it, towards the miserable condition of the slaves.

Nor were writers wanting, who, influenced by considerations on the war and the independence resulting from it, made their works subservient to the same benevolent end. A work, entitled, *A Serious Address to the Rulers of America on the Inconsistency of their Conduct respecting Slavery, forming a Contrast between the Encroachments of England on American Liberty and American Injustice in tolerating Slavery*, which appeared in 1783, was particularly instrumental in producing this effect. This excited a more than usual attention to the case of these oppressed people, and where most of all it could be useful. For the author compared in two opposite columns the animated speeches and resolutions of the members of congress in behalf of their own liberty with their conduct in continuing slavery to others. Hence the legislature began to feel the inconsistency of the practice; and so far had the sense of this inconsistency spread there, that when the delegates met from each State, to consider of a federal union, there

was a desire that the abolition of the Slave-trade should be one of the articles in it. This was, however, opposed by the delegates from North and South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Georgia, the five States which had the greatest concern in slaves. But even these offered to agree to the article, provided a condition was annexed to it, (which was afterwards done,) that the power of such abolition should not commence in the legislature till the first of January 1808.

In consequence, then, of these different circumstances, the society of Pennsylvania, the object of which was "for promoting the abolition of slavery and the relief of free Negroes unlawfully held in bondage," became so popular, that in the year 1787 it was thought desirable to enlarge it. Accordingly several new members were admitted into it. The celebrated Dr. Franklin, who had long warmly espoused the cause of the injured Africans, was appointed president; James Pemberton and Jonathan Penrose were appointed vice-presidents; Dr. Benjamin Rush and Tench Coxe, secretaries; James Star, treasurer.

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## CHAPTER V.

*Circumstance which called the attention of the Author to the African cause.*

DR. PECKARD, vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge, had distinguished himself in the earlier part of his life by certain publications on the intermediate state of the soul, and by

others in favour of civil and religious liberty. To the latter cause he was a warm friend, seldom omitting any opportunity of declaring his sentiments in its favour. In the course of his preferment he was appointed by Sir John Griffin afterwards Lord Howard, of Walden, to the mastership of Magdalen College in the University of Cambridge. In this high office he considered it to be his duty to support those doctrines which he had espoused when in an inferior station; and accordingly, when in the year 1784 it devolved upon him to preach a sermon before the University of Cambridge, he chose his favourite subject, in the handling of which he took an opportunity of speaking of the Slave-trade in the following nervous manner:

“Now, whether we consider the crime, with respect to the individuals concerned in this most barbarous and cruel traffic, or whether we consider it as patronized and encouraged by the laws of the land, it presents to our view an equal degree of enormity. A crime, founded on dreadful preeminence in wickedness: a crime which, being both of individuals and the nation must some time draw down upon us the heavy judgement of Almighty God, who made of one blood all the sons of men, and who gave to equally a natural right to liberty; and who, ruling all the kingdoms of the earth with equal providential justice, cannot suffer such deliberate, such monstrous iniquity, to pass long unpunished.”

But Dr. Peckard did not consider this deliberate testimony, though it was given before a learned and religious body, as a sufficient charge of his duty, while any opportunity

mained of renewing it with effect. And, as such an one offered in the year 1785, when he was vice-chancellor of the University, he embraced it. In consequence of his office, it devolved upon him to give out two subjects for Latin dissertations, one to the middle bachelors, and the other to the senior bachelors of arts. They who produced the best were to obtain the prizes. To the latter, he proposed the following: "*Anne liceat Invitos in Servitutem dare?*" or, "Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?"

This circumstance of giving out the subjects for the prizes, though only an ordinary measure, became the occasion of my own labours, or of the real honour which I feel in being able to consider myself as the next coadjutor of this class in the cause of the injured Africans. For it happened in this year that, being of the order of senior bachelors, I became qualified to write. I had gained a prize for the best Latin dissertation in the former year, and, therefore, it was expected that I should obtain one in the present, or I should be considered as having lost my reputation both in the eyes of the University and of my own College. It had happened also, that I had been honoured with the first of the prizes\* in that year, and therefore it was expected again, that I should obtain the first on this occasion. The acquisition of the second, however honourable, would have been considered as a falling off, or as a loss of former fame. I felt myself, therefore, particularly called upon to maintain

\* There are two prizes on each subject, one for the best and the other for the second-best essays.

my post. And, with feelings of this kind, I began to prepare myself for the question.

In studying the thesis, I conceived it to point directly to the African Slave-trade, and more particularly as I knew that Dr. Peckard, in the sermon which I have mentioned, had pronounced so warmly against it. At any rate, I determined to give it this construction. But, alas! I was wholly ignorant of this subject; and, what was unfortunate, a few weeks only were allowed for the composition. I was determined, however, to make the best use of my time. I got access to the manuscript papers of a deceased friend, who had been in the trade. I was acquainted also with several officers who had been in the West-Indies, and from these I gained something. But I still felt myself at a loss for materials, and I did not know where to get them; when going by accident into a friend's house, I took up a newspaper then lying on his table. One of the articles, which attracted my notice, was an advertisement of Anthony Benezet's Historical Account of Guinea. I soon left my friend and his paper, and, to lose no time, hastened to London to buy it. In this precious book I found almost all I wanted. I obtained, by means of it, a knowledge of, and gained access to, the great authorities of Adanson, Moore, Barbot, Smith, Bosman, and others. It was of great consequence to know what these persons had said upon this subject. For, having been themselves either long resident in Africa, or very frequently there, their knowledge of it could not be questioned. Having been concerned also in the trade, it was not likely that they would criminate themselves more than they could avoid.

Writing too at a time, when the abolition was not even thought of, they could not have been biassed with any view to that event. And, lastly, having been dead many years, they could not have been influenced, as living evidences may be supposed to have been, either to conceal or to exaggerate, as their own interest might lead them, either by being concerned in the continuance of the trade, or by supporting the opinions of those of their patrons in power, who were on the different sides of this question.

Furnished then in this manner, I began my work. But no person can tell the severe trial, which the writing of it proved to me. I had expected pleasure from the invention of the arguments, from the arrangement of them, from the putting of them together, and from the thought in the interim that I was engaged in an innocent contest for literary honour. But all my pleasure was damped by the facts which were now continually before me. It was but one gloomy subject from morning to night. In the daytime I was uneasy. In the night I had little rest. I sometimes never closed my eyelids for grief. It became now not so much a trial for academical reputation, as for the production of a work, which might be useful to injured Africa. And keeping this idea in my mind ever after the perusal of Benezet, I always slept with a candle in my room, that I might rise out of bed and put down such thoughts as might occur to me in the night, if I judged them valuable, conceiving that no arguments of any moment should be lost in so great a cause. Having at length finished this painful task, I sent my Essay to the vice-



chancellor, and soon afterwards found myself honoured as before with the first prize.

As it is usual to read these essays publicly in the senatehouse soon after the prize is adjudged, I was called to Cambridge for this purpose. I went and performed my office. On returning however to London, the subject of it almost wholly engrossed my thoughts. I became at times very seriously affected while upon the road. I stopped my horse occasionally, and dismounted and walked. I frequently tried to persuade myself in these intervals that the contents of my Essay could not be true. The more however I reflected upon them, or rather upon the authorities on which they were founded, the more I gave them credit. Coming in sight of Wade's Mill in Hertfordshire, I sat down disconsolate on the turf by the road side and held my horse. Here a thought came into my mind, that if the contents of the Essay were true, it was time some person should see these calamities to their end. Agitated in this manner I reached home. This was in the summer of 1785.

In the course of the autumn of the same year I experienced similar impressions. I walked frequently into the woods, that I might think on the subject in solitude, and find relief to my mind there. But there the question still recurred, "Are these things true?" Still the answer followed as instantaneously, "They are." Still the result accompanied it, "Then surely some person should interfere." I then began to envy those who had seats in parliament, and who had great riches, and widely extended connexions, which would enable them to take up this cause.

Finding scarcely any one at that time who thought of it, I was turned frequently to myself. But here many difficulties arose. It struck me, among others, that a young man of only twenty-four years of age could not have that solid judgment, or knowledge of men, manners, and things, which were requisite to qualify him to undertake a task of such magnitude and importance; and with whom was I to unite? I believed also that it looked so much like one of the feigned labours of Hercules, that my understanding would be suspected if I proposed it. On ruminating however on the subject, I found one thing at least practicable, and that this also was in my power. I could translate my Latin dissertation. I could enlarge it usefully. I could see how the public received it, or how far they were likely to favour any serious measures, which should have a tendency to produce the abolition of the Slave-trade. Upon this then I determined; and in the middle of the month of November 1785, I began my work.

By the middle of January, I had finished half of it, though I had made considerable additions. I now thought of engaging with some bookseller to print it when finished. For this purpose I called upon Mr. Cadell, in the Strand, and consulted him about it. He said that as the original Essay had been honoured by the University of Cambridge with the first prize, this circumstance would ensure it a respectable circulation among persons of taste. I own I was not much pleased with his opinion. I wished the Essay to find its way among useful people, and among such as would think and act with me. Accordingly I left Mr. Cadell, after having thanked him for

his civility, and determined, as I thought I had time sufficient before dinner, to call upon a friend in the city. In going past the Royal Exchange, Mr. Joseph Hancock, one of the religious society of the Quakers, and with whose family my own had been long united in friendship, suddenly met me. He first accosted me by saying that I was the person, whom he was wishing to see. He then asked me why I had not published my Prize Essay. I asked him in return what had made him think of that subject in particular. He replied, that his own Society had long taken it up as a religious body, and individuals among them were wishing to find me out. I asked him who. He answered, James Phillips, a bookseller, in George-yard, Lombard-Street, and William Dillwyn, of Walthamstow, and others. Having but little time to spare, I desired him to introduce me to one of them. In a few minutes he took me to James Phillips, who was then the only one of them in town; by whose conversation I was so much interested and encouraged, that without any further hesitation I offered him the publication of my work. This accidental introduction of me to James Phillips was, I found afterwards, a most happy circumstance for the promotion of the cause, which I had then so deeply at heart, as it led me to the knowledge of several of those, who became afterwards material coadjutors in it. It was also of great importance to me with respect to the work itself. For he possessed an acute penetration, a solid judgement, and a literary knowledge, which he proved by the many alterations and additions he proposed, and which I believe I uniformly adopted, after mature con-

sideration, from a sense of their real value. It was advantageous to me also, inasmuch as it led me to his friendship, which was never interrupted but by his death.

On my second visit to James Phillips, at which time I brought him about half my manuscript for the press, I desired him to introduce me to William Dillwyn, as he also had mentioned him to me on my first visit, and as I had not seen Mr. Hancock since. Matters were accordingly arranged, and a day appointed before I left him. On this day I had my first interview with my new friend. Two or three others of his own religious society were present, but who they were I do not now recollect. There seemed to be a great desire among them to know the motive by which I had been actuated in contending for the prize. I told them frankly, that I had no motive but that which other young men in the University had on such occasions; namely, the wish of being distinguished, or of obtaining literary honour; but that I had felt so deeply on the subject of it, that I had lately interested myself in it from a motive of duty. My conduct seemed to be highly approved by those present, and much conversation ensued, but it was of a general nature.

As William Dillwyn wished very much to see me at his house at Walthamstow, I appointed the thirteenth of March to spend the day with him there. We talked for the most part, during my stay, on the subject of my Essay. I soon discovered the treasure I had met with in his local knowledge, both of the Slave-trade and of slavery, as they existed in the United States, and I gained from him several facts, which with his

permission I afterwards inserted in my work. But how surprised was I to hear in the course of our conversation of the labours of Granville Sharp, of the writings of Ramsay, and of the controversy in which the latter was engaged, of all which I had hitherto known nothing ! How surprised was I to learn, that William Dillwyn himself, had two years before associated himself with five others for the purpose of enlightening the public mind upon this great subject ! How astonished was I to find that a society had been formed in America for the same object, with some of the principal members of which he was intimately acquainted ! And how still more astonished at the inference which instantly rushed upon my mind, that he was capable of being made the great medium of connexion between them all. These thoughts almost overpowered me. I believe that after this I talked but little more to my friend. My mind was overwhelmed with the thought that I had been providentially directed to his house ; that the finger of Providence was beginning to be discernible ; that the daystar of African liberty was rising, and that probably I might be permitted to become a humble instrument in promoting it.

In the course of attending to my work, as now in the press, James Phillips introduced me also to Granville Sharp, with whom I had afterwards many interesting interviews from time to time, and whom I discovered to be a distant relation by my father's side.

He introduced me also by letter to a correspondence with Mr. Ramsay, who in a short time afterwards came to London to see me.

*He introduced me also to his cousin, Richard*

Phillips of Lincoln's Inn, who was at that time on the point of joining the religious society of the Quakers. In him I found much sympathy, and a willingness to cooperate with me. When dull and disconsolate, he encouraged me. When in spirits, he stimulated me further. Him I am now to mention as a new, but soon afterwards as an active and indefatigable coadjutor in the cause. But I shall say more concerning him in a future chapter. I shall only now add, that my work was at length printed; that it was entitled, *An Essay on the Slavery and commerce of the human Species, particularly the African, translated from a Latin Dissertation, which was honoured with the First Prize in the University of Cambridge, for the Year 1785; with Additions; and that it was ushered into the world in the month of June 1786, or in about a year after it had been read in the Senatehouse in its first form.*

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## CHAPTER VI.

*Author's farther account of his labours and feelings.—New friends to the cause discovered.—Mr. Wilberforce.—Committee formed.*

I HAD purposed, as I said before, when I determined to publish my Essay, to wait to see how the world would receive it, or what disposition there would be in the public to favour my measures for the abolition of the Slave-trade. But the conversation, which I had held on the thirteenth of March with William Dillwyn, continued to make such an impression upon me, that I thought now there could be no occasion

for waiting for such a purpose. It seemed now only necessary to go forward. Others I found had already begun the work. I had been thrown suddenly among these, as into a new world of friends. I believed also that a way was opening under Providence for support. And I now thought that nothing remained for me but to procure as many coadjutors as I could.

I had long had the honour of the friendship of Mr. Bennet Langton, and I determined to carry him one of my books, and to interest his feelings in it, with a view of procuring his assistance in the cause. Mr. Langton was a gentleman of an ancient family, and respectable fortune in Lincolnshire, but resided then in Queen's-square, Westminster. He was known as the friend of Dr. Johnson, Jonas Hanway, Edmund Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and others. Among his acquaintance indeed were most of the literary, and eminent professional, and public-spirited men of the times. At court also he was well known, and had the esteem of his present majesty, with whom he frequently conversed. His friends were numerous also in both houses of the legislature. As to himself, he was much noted for his learning, but most of all for the great example he gave with respect to the usefulness and integrity of his life.

By introducing my work to the sanction of a friend of such high character and extensive connexions, I thought I should be doing great things. And so the event proved. For when I went to him after he had read it, I found that it had made a deep impression upon his mind. As a friend to humanity he lamented over the miseries of the oppressed Africans, and over the

crimes of their tyrants as a friend to morality and religion. He cautioned me, however, against being too sanguine in my expectations, as so many thousands were interested in continuing the trade. Justice, however, which he said weighed with him beyond all private or political interest, demanded a public inquiry, and he would assist me to the utmost of his power in my attempts towards it. From this time he became a zealous and active coadjutor in the cause, and continued so to the end of his valuable life.

The next person, to whom I gave my work with a like view, was Dr. Baker, a clergyman of the Establishment, and with whom I had been in habits of intimacy for some time. Dr. Baker was a learned and pious man. He had performed the duties of his profession from the time of his initiation into the church in an exemplary manner, not only by paying a proper attention to the customary services, but by the frequent visitation of the sick and the instructions of the poor. This he had done too to admiration in a particularly extensive parish. At the time I knew him he had Mayfair chapel, of which an unusual portion of the congregation consisted then of persons of rank and fortune. With most of these he had a personal acquaintance. This was of great importance to me in the promotion of my views. Having left him my book for a month, I called upon him. The result was that which I expected from so good a man. He did not wait for me to ask him for his cooperation, but he offered his services in any way which I might think most eligible, feeling it his duty, as he expressed it, to become an instrument in exposing such



a complication of guilt and misery to the world. Dr. Baker became from this time an active co-adjutor also, and continued so to his death.

The person, to whom I sent my work next, was the late Lord Scarsdale, whose family I had known for about two years. Both he and his lady read it with attention. They informed me, after the perusal of it, that both of them were desirous of assisting me in promoting the cause of the poor Africans. Lady Scarsdale lamented that she might possibly offend near and dear connexions, who had interests in the West-Indies, by so doing ; but that conscious of no intention to offend these, and considering the duties of religion to be the first to be attended to, she should be pleased to become useful in so good a cause. Lord Scarsdale also assured me, that, if the subject should ever come before the House of Lords, it should have his constant support.

While attempting to make friends in this manner, I received a letter from Mr. Ramsay, with an invitation to spend a month at his house at Teston, near Maidstone in Kent. This I accepted, that I might communicate to him the progress I had made, that I might gain more knowledge from him on the subject, and that I might acquire new strength and encouragement to proceed. On hearing my account of my proceedings, which I detailed to him on the first evening of our meeting, he seemed almost overpowered with joy. He said he had been long of opinion. that the release of the Africans from the scourges of this cruel trade, was within the determined views of Providence, and that by turning the public attention to their misery, we

should be the instruments of beginning the good work. He then informed me how long he himself had had their cause at heart; that communicating his feelings to Sir Charles Middleton (now Lord Barham) and his lady, the latter had urged him to undertake a work in their behalf; that her importunities were great respecting it; and that he had on this account, and in obedience also to his own feelings, as has been before mentioned, begun it; but that, foreseeing the censure and abuse, which such a subject, treated in any possible manner, must bring upon the author, he had laid it aside for some time. He had, however, resumed it at the solicitation of Dr. Porteus, then bishop of Chester, after which, in the year 1784, it made its appearance in the world.

I was delighted with this account on the first evening of my arrival; but more particularly as I collected from it, that I might expect in the bishop of Chester and Sir Charles Middleton, two new friends to the cause. This expectation was afterwards fully realized, as the reader will see in its proper place. But I was still more delighted, when I was informed that Sir Charles and Lady Middleton, with Mrs. Bouverie, lived at Testonhall, in a park, which was but a few yards from the house in which I then was. In the morning I desired an introduction to them, which accordingly took place, and I found myself much encouraged and supported by this visit.

It is not necessary, nor indeed is there room, to detail my employments in this village, or the lonely walks I took there, or the meditations of my mind at such seasons. I will therefore come

at once to a particular occurrence. When at dinner one day with the family at Testonhall, I was much pleased with the turn which the conversation had taken on the subject, and in the joy of my heart, I exclaimed, that "I was ready to devote myself to the cause." This brought great commendation from those present; and Sir Charles Middleton added, that if I wanted any information in the course of my future inquiries relative to Africa, which he could procure me as comptroller of the navy, such as extracts from the journals of the ships of war to that continent, or from other papers, I should have free access to his office. This offer I received with thankfulness, and it operated as a new encouragement to me to proceed.

The next morning, when I awoke, one of the first things that struck me was, that I had given a pledge to the company the day before, that I would devote myself to the cause of the oppressed Africans. I became a little uneasy at this. I questioned whether I had considered matters sufficiently to be able to go so far with propriety. I determined therefore to give the subject a full consideration, and accordingly I walked to the place of my usual meditations, the woods.

Having now reached a place of solitude, I began to balance every thing on both sides of the question. I considered first, that I had not yet obtained information sufficient on the subject, to qualify me for the undertaking of such a work. But I reflected, on the other hand, that Sir Charles Middleton had just opened to me a new source of knowledge; that I should be backed by the local information of Dillwyn and Ramsay,

and that surely, by taking pains, I could acquire more.

I then considered, that I had not yet a sufficient number of friends to support me. This occasioned me to review them. I had now Sir Charles Middleton, who was in the House of Commons. I was sure of Dr. Porteus, who was in the House of Lords. I could count upon Lord Scarsdale, who was a peer also. I had secured Mr. Langton, who had a most extensive acquaintance with members of both houses of the legislature. I had also secured Dr. Baker, who had similar connexions. I could depend upon Granville Sharp, James Phillips, Richard Phillips, Ramsay, Dillwyn, and the little committee to which he belonged, as well as the whole society of the Quakers. I thought therefore upon the whole, that, considering the short time I had been at work, I was well off with respect to support. I believed also that there were still several of my own acquaintance, whom I could interest in the question, and I did not doubt that, by exerting myself diligently, persons, who were then strangers to me, would be raised up in time.

I considered next, that it was impossible for a great cause like this to be forwarded without large pecuniary funds. I questioned whether some thousand pounds would not be necessary, and from whence was such a sum to come? In answer to this, I persuaded myself that generous people would be found, who would unite with me in contributing their mite towards the undertaking, and I seemed confident that, as the Quakers had taken up the cause as a religious

body, they would not be behind hand in supporting it.

I considered lastly, that, if I took up the question, I must devote myself wholly to it. It was sensible that a little labour now and then would be inadequate to the purpose, or that where the interests of so many thousand persons were likely to be affected, constant exertion would be necessary. I felt certain that, if even the matter were to be taken up, there could be no hope of success, except it should be taken up by some one, who would make it an object of business of his life. I thought too that a man's life might not be more than adequate to the accomplishment of the end. But I knew of no one who could devote such a portion of time to it. Sir Charles Middleton, though he was warm and zealous, was greatly occupied in the discharge of his office. Mr. Langton spent a great portion of his time in the education of his children. Dr. Baker had a great deal to do in the performance of his parochial duty. The Quakers were almost all of them in trade. I could look therefore to no person but myself and the question was, whether I was prepared to make the sacrifice. In favour of the undertaking I urged to myself, that never was any cause which had been taken up by man in any country or in any age, so great and important; that never was there one in which so much misery was heard to cry for redress; that never was there one, in which so much good could be done; never one, in which the duty of Christian charity could be so extensively exercised; never one, more worthy of the devotion of a whole life towards it; and that, if a man thought pro

erly, he ought to rejoice to have been called into existence, if he were only permitted to become an instrument in forwarding it in any part of its progress. Against these sentiments on the other hand I had to urge, that I had been designed for the church; that I had already advanced as far as deacon's orders in it; that my prospects there on account of my connexions were then brilliant; that, by appearing to desert my profession, my family would be dissatisfied, if not unhappy. These thoughts pressed upon me, and rendered the conflict difficult. But the sacrifice of my prospects staggered me, I own, the most. When the other objections, which I have related, occurred to me, my enthusiasm instantly, like a flash of lightning, consumed them: but this stuck to me, and troubled me. I had ambition. I had a thirst after worldly interest and honours, and I could not extinguish it at once. I was more than two hours in solitude under this painful conflict. At length I yielded, not because I saw any reasonable prospect of success in my new undertaking (for all cool-headed and cool hearted men would have pronounced against it) but in obedience, I believe, to a higher Power. And this I can say, that both on the moment of this resolution, and for some time afterwards I had more sublime and happy feelings than at any former period of my life.

Having now made up my mind on the subject, I informed Mr. Ramsay, that in a few days I should be leaving Teston, that I might begin my labours, according to the pledge I had given him.

On my return to London, I called upon William Dillwyn, to inform him of the resolution I

had made at Teston, and found him at his town lodgings in the Poultry. I informed him also, that I had a letter of introduction in my pocket from Sir Charles Middleton to Samuel Hoare, with whom I was to converse on the subject. The latter gentleman had interested himself the year before as one of the committee for the black poor in London, whom Mr. Sharp was sending under the auspices of government to Sierra Leone. William Dillwyn said he would go with me and introduce me himself. On our arrival in Lombard-street, I saw my new friend, with whom we conversed for some time. From thence I proceeded, accompanied by both, to the house of James Phillips in George-yard, to whom I was desirous of communicating my resolution also. We found him at home, conversing with a friend of the same religious society, whose name was Joseph Gurney Bevan. I then repeated my resolution before them all. We had much friendly and satisfactory conversation together, I received much encouragement on every side, and I fixed to meet them again at the place where we then were in three days.

On the evening of the same day I waited upon Granville Sharp to make the same communication to him. He received it with great pleasure, and he hoped I should have strength to proceed. From thence I went to the Baptist-head coffee-house, in Chancery lane, and having engaged with the master of the house, that I should always have one private room to myself when I wanted it, I took up my abode there, in order to be near my friend Richard Phillips of Lincoln's Inn, from whose advice and assistance I had formed considerable expectations.

The first matter for our deliberation, after we had thus become neighbours, was what plan I ought to pursue to give effect to the resolution I had taken.

After having discussed the matter two or three times at his chambers, it seemed to be our opinion, That as members of the legislature could do more to the purpose in this question than any other persons, it would be proper to circulate all the remaining copies of my work among these, in order that they might thus obtain information upon the subject. Secondly, That it would be proper that I should wait personally upon several of these also. And thirdly, That I should be endeavouring in the interim to enlarge my own knowledge, that I might thus be enabled to answer the various objections, which might be advanced on the other side of the question, as well as become qualified to be a manager of the cause.

On the third day, or at the time appointed, I went with Richard Phillips to George-yard, Lombard-street, where I met all my friends as before. I communicated to them the opinion we had formed at Lincoln's Inn, relative to my future proceedings in the three different branches as now detailed. They approved the plan. On desiring a number of my books to be sent to me at my new lodgings for the purpose of distribution, Joseph Gurney Bevan, who was stated to have been present at the former interview, seemed uneasy, and at length asked me if I was going to distribute these at my own expense. I replied, I was. He appealed immediately to those present whether it ought to be allowed. He asked whether, when a young man was giv-



ing up his time from morning till night, they, who applauded his pursuit and seemed desirous of cooperating with him, should allow him to make such a sacrifice, or whether they should not at least secure him from loss; and he proposed directly that the remaining part of the edition should be taken off by subscription, and in order that my feelings might not be hurt from any supposed stain arising from the thought of gaining any thing by such a proposal, they should be paid for only at the prime cost. I felt myself much obliged to him for this tender consideration about me, and particularly for the latter part of it, under which alone I accepted the offer. Samuel Hoare was charged with the management of the subscription, and the books were to be distributed as I had proposed, and in any way which I myself might prescribe.

This matter having been determined upon, my first care was that the books should be put into proper hands. Accordingly I went round among my friends from day to day, wishing to secure this before I attended to any of the other objects. In this I was much assisted by my friend Richard Phillips. Mr. Langton began the distribution of them. He made a point either of writing to or of calling upon those, to whom he sent them. Dr. Baker took the charge of several for the same purpose. Lord and Lady Scarsdale of others. Sir Charles and Lady Middleton of others. Mr. Sheldon, at the request of Richard Phillips, introduced me by letter to several members of parliament, to whom I wished to deliver them myself. Sir Herbert Mackworth, when spoken to by the latter, offered his services also. He seemed to be particularly

interested in the cause. He went about to many of his friends in the House of Commons, and this from day to day, to procure their favour towards it. Lord Newhaven was applied to, and distributed some. Lord Balgonie (now Leven) took a similar charge. The late Lord Hawke, who told me that he had long felt for the sufferings of the injured Africans, desired to be permitted to take his share of the distribution among members of the House of Lords, and Dr. Porteus, now bishop of London, became another coadjutor in the same work.

This distribution of my books having been consigned to proper hands, I began to qualify myself, by obtaining further knowledge, for the management of this great cause. As I had obtained the principal part of it from reading, I thought I ought now to see what could be seen, and to know from living persons what could be known, on the subject. With respect to the first of these points, the river Thames presented itself as at hand. Ships were going occasionally from the port of London to Africa, and why could I not get on board them and examine for myself? After diligent inquiry, I heard of one which had just arrived. I found her to be a little wood vessel, called the Lively, captain Williamson, or one which traded to Africa in the natural productions of the country, such as ivory, beeswax, Malaguetta pepper, palm-oil, and dyewoods. I obtained specimens of some of these, so that I now became possessed of some of those things of which I had only read before. On conversing with the mate, he showed me one or two pieces of the cloth made by the natives, and from their own cotton. I prevailed upon him to sell me a

piece of each. Here new feelings arose, and particularly when I considered that persons of so much apparent ingenuity, and capable of such beautiful work as the Africans, should be made slaves, and reduced to a level with the brute creation. My reflections here on the better use which might be made of Africa by the substitution of another trade, and on the better use which might be made of her inhabitants, served greatly to animate, and to sustain me amidst the labour of my pursuits.

The next vessel I boarded was the *Fly*, captain Colley: Here I found myself for the first time on the deck of a slave vessel. The sight of the rooms below and of the gratings above, and of the barricado across the deck, and the explanation of the uses of all these, filled me both with melancholy and horror. I found soon afterwards a fire of indignation kindling within me. I had now scarce patience to talk with those on board. I had not the coolness this first time to go leisurely over the places that were open to me. I got away quickly. But that which I thought I saw horrible in this vessel had the same effect upon me as that which I thought I had seen agreeable in the other, namely, to animate and to invigorate me in my pursuit.

But I will not trouble the reader with any further account of my water expeditions, while attempting to perfect my knowledge on this subject. I was equally assiduous in obtaining intelligence wherever it could be had; and being now always on the watch, I was frequently falling in with individuals, from whom I gained something. My object was to see all who had been in Africa, but more particularly those who

had never been interested, or who at any rate were not then interested, in the trade. I gained accordingly access very early to general Rooke; to lieutenant Dalrymple, of the army; to captain Fiddes, of the engineers; to the reverend Mr. Newton; to Mr. Nisbett, a surgeon in the Minorities; to Mr. Devaynes, who was then in parliament, and to many others; and I made it a rule to put down in writing, after every conversation, what had taken place in the course of it. By these means things began to unfold themselves to me more and more, and I found my stock of knowledge almost daily on the increase.

While, however, I was forwarding this, I was not inattentive to the other object of my pursuit, which was that of waiting upon members personally. The first I called upon was Sir Richard Hill. At the first interview he espoused the cause. I waited then upon others, and they professed themselves friendly; but they seemed to make this profession more from the emotion of good hearts, revolting at the bare mention of the Slave-trade than from any knowledge concerning it. One, however, whom I visited, Mr. Powys (the late lord Lilford) with whom I had been before acquainted in Northamptonshire, seemed to doubt some of the facts in my book, from a belief that human nature was not capable of proceeding to such a pitch of wickedness. I asked him to name his facts. He selected the case of the hundred and thirty-two slaves who were thrown alive into the sea to defraud the underwriters. I promised to satisfy him fully upon this point, and went immediately to Granville Sharp, who lent me his account of the trial,

as reported at large from the notes of the shorthand writer, whom he had employed on the occasion. Mr. Powys read the account. He became, in consequence of it, convinced, as, indeed, he could not otherwise be, of the truth of what I had asserted, and he declared at the same time that, if this were true, there was nothing so horrible related of this trade, which might not immediately be believed. Mr. Powys had been always friendly to this question, but now he took a part in the distribution of my books.

Among those, whom I visited, was Mr. Wilberforce. On my first interview with him, he stated frankly, that the subject had often employed his thoughts, and that it was near his heart. He seemed earnest about it, and also very desirous of taking the trouble of inquiring farther into it. Having read my book, which I had delivered to him in person, he sent for me. He expressed a wish that I would make him acquainted with some of my authorities for the assertions in it, which I did afterwards to his satisfaction. He asked me if I could support it by any other evidence. I told him I could. I mentioned Mr. Newton, Mr. Nisbett, and several others to him. He took the trouble of sending for all these. He made memoranda of their conversation, and, sending for me afterwards, showed them to me. On learning my intention to devote myself to the cause, he paid me many handsome compliments. He then desired me to call upon him often, and to acquaint him with my progress from time to time. He expressed also his willingness to afford me any assistance in his power in the prosecution of my pursuits.

The carrying on of these different objects,

together with the writing which was connected with them, proved very laborious, and occupied almost all my time. I was seldom engaged less than sixteen hours in the day. When I left Teston to begin the pursuit as an object of my life, I promised my friend Mr. Ramsay a weekly account of my progress. At the end of the first week my letter to him contained little more than a sheet of paper. At the end of the second it contained three; at the end of the third six; and at the end of the fourth I found it would be so voluminous, that I was obliged to decline writing it.

The manner in which Mr. Wilberforce had received me, and the pains which he had taken, and was still taking, to satisfy himself of the truth of those enormities which had been charged upon the Slave-trade, tended much to enlarge my hope, that they might become at length the subject of a parliamentary inquiry. Richard Phillips also, to whom I made a report at his chambers almost every evening of the proceedings of the day, had begun to entertain a similar expectation. Of course, we unfolded our thoughts to one another. From hence a desire naturally sprung up in each of us to inquire, whether any alteration in consequence of this new prospect should be made in my pursuits. On deliberating upon this point, it seemed proper to both of us, that the distribution of the books should be continued; that I should still proceed in enlarging my own knowledge; and that I should still wait upon members of the legislature, but with this difference, that I should never lose sight of Mr. Wilberforce, but, on the other

hand, that I should rather omit visiting some others, than paying a proper attention to him.

One thing however appeared now to be necessary, which had not yet been done. This was to inform our friends in the city, upon whom I had all along occasionally called, that we believed the time was approaching, when it would be desirable that we should unite our labours, if they saw no objection to such a measure ; for, if the Slave-trade were to become a subject of parliamentary inquiry with a view to the annihilation of it, no individual could perform the work which would be necessary for such a purpose. 'This work must be a work of many ; and who so proper to assist in it as they, who had before so honourably laboured in it ? In the case of such an event large funds also would be wanted, and who so proper to procure and manage them as these ? A meeting was accordingly called at the house of James Phillips, when these our views were laid open. When I stated that from the very time of my hopes beginning to rise I had always had those present in my eye as one day to be fellow labourers, William Dillwyn replied, that from the time they had first heard of the Prize Essay, they also had had their eyes upon me, and, from the time they had first seen me, had conceived a desire of making the same use of me as I had now expressed a wish of making of them, but that matters did not appear ripe at our first interview. Our proposal, however, was approved and an assurance was given, that an union should take place, as soon as it was judged to be seasonable. It was resolved also, that one day in the week should be appointed for a meeting at the house of James Phillips, where as many might attend as had

leisure, and that I should be there to make a report of my progress, by which we might all judge of the fitness of the time of calling ourselves an united body. Pleased now with the thought that matters were put into such a train, I returned to my former objects.

It is not necessary to say any thing more of the first of these objects, which was that of the further distribution of my book, than that it was continued, and chiefly by the same hands.

With respect to the enlargement of my knowledge, it was promoted likewise. I now gained access to the Custom-house in London, where I picked up much valuable information for my purpose.

Having had reason to believe that the Slave-trade was peculiarly fatal to those employed in it, I wished much to get copies of many of the muster-rolls from the Custom-house at Liverpool for a given time. James Phillips wrote to his friend William Rathborne, who was one of his own religious society, and who resided there, to procure them. They were accordingly sent up. The examination of these, which took place at the chambers of Richard Phillips, was long and tedious. We looked over them together. We usually met for this purpose at nine in the evening, and we seldom parted till one, and sometimes not till three in the morning. When our eyes were inflamed by the candle, or tired by fatigue, we used to relieve ourselves by walking out within the precincts of Lincoln's Inn, when all seemed to be fast asleep, and thus, as it were, in solitude and in stillness to converse upon them, as well as upon the best means of the further promotion of our cause. These scenes of our



early friendship and exertions I shall never forget. I often think of them both with astonishment and with pleasure. Having recruited ourselves in this manner, we used to return to our work. From these muster-rolls I may now observe, that we gained the most important information. We ascertained beyond the power of contradiction, that more than half of the seamen, who went out with the ships in the Slave-trade, did not return with them, and that of these so many perished, as amounted to one fifth of all employed. As to what became of the remainder, the muster-rolls did not inform us. This, therefore, was left to us as a subject for our future inquiry.

In endeavouring to enlarge my knowledge, my thoughts were frequently turned to the West-Indian part of the question, and in this department my friend Richard Phillips gained me important intelligence. He put into my hands several documents concerning estates in the West-Indies, which he had mostly from the proprietors themselves, where the slaves by mild and prudent usage had so increased in population, as to supersede the necessity of the Slave-trade.

By attending to those and to various other parts of the subject, I began to see as it were with new eyes: I was enabled to make several necessary discriminations, to reconcile things before seemingly contradictory, and to answer many objections which had hitherto put on a formidable shape. But most of all was I rejoiced at the thought that I should soon be able to prove that which I had never doubted, but which had hitherto been beyond my power in this case, that Providence, in ordaining laws relative to the

agency of man, had never made that to be wise which was immoral, and that the Slave-trade would be found as impolitic as it was inhuman and unjust.

In keeping up my visits to members of parliament, I was particularly attentive to Mr. Wilberforce, whom I found daily becoming more interested in the fate of Africa. I now made to him a regular report of my progress, of the sentiments of those in parliament whom I had visited, of the disposition of my friends in the city of whom he had often heard me speak, of my discoveries from the Custom-houses of London and Liverpool, of my documents concerning West-India estates, and of all, indeed, that had occurred to me worth mentioning. He had himself also been making his inquiries, which he communicated to me in return. Our intercourse had now become frequent, no one week elapsing without an interview. At one of these, I suggested to him the propriety of having occasional meetings at his own house, consisting of a few friends in parliament, who might converse on the subject. Of this he approved. The persons present at the first meeting were Mr. Wilberforce, the honourable John Villiers, Mr. Powys, Sir Charles Middleton, Sir Richard Hill, Mr. Granville Sharp, Mr. Ramsay, Dr. Gregory, (who had written on the subject, as before mentioned,) and myself. At this meeting I read a paper giving an account of the light I had collected in the course of my inquiries, with observations as well on the impolicy as on the wickedness of the trade. Many questions arose out of the reading of this little Essay. Many answers followed. Objections were started and

canvassed. In short, this measure was found so useful, that certain other evenings as well as mornings were fixed upon for the same purpose.

On reporting my progress to my friends in the city, several of whom now assembled once in the week, as I mentioned before to have been agreed upon, and particularly on reporting the different meetings which had taken place at the house of Mr. Wilberforce, on the subject, they were of opinion that the time was approaching when we might unite, and that this union might prudently commence as soon as ever Mr. Wilberforce would give his word that he would take up the question in parliament. Upon this I desired to observe, that though the latter gentleman had pursued the subject with much earnestness, he had never yet dropped the least hint that he would proceed so far in the matter, but I would take care that the question should be put to him, and I would bring them his answer.

In consequence of the promise I had now made, I went to Mr. Wilberforce. But when I saw him, I seemed unable to inform him of the object of my visit. Whether this inability arose from any sudden fear that his answer might not be favourable, or from a fear that I might possibly involve him in a long and arduous contest upon this subject, or whether it arose from an awful sense of the importance of the mission, as it related to the happiness of hundreds of thousands then alive, and of millions then unborn, I cannot say. But I had a feeling within me for which I could not account, and which seemed to hinder me from proceeding. And I actually went away without informing him of my errand.

*In this situation I began to consider what to*

do, when I thought I would call upon Mr. Langton, tell him what had happened, and ask his advice. I found him at home. We consulted together. The result was, that he was to invite Mr. Wilberforce and some others to meet me at a dinner at his own house, in two or three days, when he said he had no doubt of being able to procure an answer, by some means or other, to the question which I wished to have resolved.

On receiving a card from Mr. Langton, I went to dine with him. I found the party consist of Sir Charles Middleton, Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Hawkins Browne, Mr. Windham, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Mr. Boswell. The latter was then known as the friend of Dr. Johnson, and afterwards as the writer of his *Tour to the Hebrides*. After dinner the subject of the Slave-trade was purposely introduced. Many questions were put to me, and I dilated upon each in my answers, that I might inform and interest those present as much as I could. They seemed to be greatly impressed with my account of the loss of seamen in the trade, and with the little samples of African cloth, which I had procured for their inspection. Sir Joshua Reynolds gave his unqualified approbation of the abolition of this cruel traffic. Mr. Hawkins Browne joined heartily with him in sentiment; he spoke with much feeling upon it, and pronounced it to be barbarous, and contrary to every principle of morality and religion. Mr. Boswell, after saying the planters would urge that the Africans were made happier by being carried from their own country to the West-Indies, observed, "Be it so. But we have no right to make people happy against their will." Mr. Windham, when it was

suggested that the great importance of our West-Indian islands, and the grandeur of Liverpool, would be brought against those who should propose the abolition of the Slave-trade, replied, "We have nothing to do with the policy of the measure. Rather let Liverpool and the islands be swallowed up in the sea, than this monstrous system of iniquity be carried on."\*

While such conversation was passing, and when all appeared to be interested in the cause, Mr. Langton put the question, about the proposal of which I had been so diffident, to Mr. Wilberforce, in the shape of a delicate compliment. The latter replied, that he had no objection to bring forward the measure in parliament, when he was better prepared for it, and provided no person more proper could be found. Upon this, Mr. Hawkins Browne and Mr. Windham both said they would support him there. Before I left the company, I took Mr. Wilberforce aside, and asked him if I might mention this his resolution to those of my friends in the city, of whom he had often heard me speak, as desirous of aiding him by becoming a committee for the purpose. He replied, I might. I then asked Mr. Langton, privately, if he had any objection to belong to a society of which there might be a committee for the abolition of the Slave-trade. He said he should be pleased to become a member of it. Having received these satisfactory answers, I returned home.

The next day, having previously taken down

\* I do not know upon what grounds, after such strong expressions, Mr. Boswell, in the next year, and Mr. Windham, after having supported the cause for three or four years, became inimical to it

stance of the conversation at the dinner, to James Phillips. and desired that our might be called together as soon as they gently could, to hear my report. In the I wrote to Dr. Peckard, and waited upon carsdale, Dr. Baker, and others. to know ing a society were formed for the aboli- (the Slave-trade) if I might say they belong to it? All of them replied in the ive, and desired me to represent them, if ould be any meeting for this purpose. e time appointed, I met my friends. I er the substance of the conversation ad taken place at Mr. Langton's. No y occurred. All were unanimous for the on of a committee. On the next day we agreement for this purpose. It was then l unanimously, among other things, That ve-trade was both impolitic and unjust. esolved also, That the following persons nmittee for procuring such information lence, and publishing the same, as may the abolition of the Slave-trade, and for g the application of such moneys as have eady, and may hereafter be collected for re purpose.

ville Sharp,	Thomas Clarkson,
am Dillwyn,	Richard Phillips,
el Hoare,	John Barton,
re Harrison,	Joseph Hooper,
Lloyd,	James Phillips,
h Woods,	Philip Sansom.

the formation of the committee, notice t to Mr. Wilberforce of the event, and a ip began, which has continued uninter-

ruptedly between them, from that to the present day.

On the twenty-fourth of May the committee met to promote the object of its institution.

The treasurer reported at this meeting, that the subscriptions already received, amounted to one hundred and thirty-six pounds.

As I had foreseen, long before this time, that my Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species was too large for general circulation, and yet that a general circulation of knowledge on this subject was absolutely necessary, I determined, directly after the formation of the committee, to write a short pamphlet consisting only of eight or ten pages for this purpose. I called it, A Summary View of the Slave-trade, and of the probable Consequences of its Abolition.

This little piece I presented to the committee at this their second meeting. It was then duly read and examined; and the result was, that, after some little correction, it was approved, and that two thousand copies of it were ordered to be printed, with lists of the subscribers and of the committee, and to be sent to various parts of the kingdom.

At a meeting of the committee on June 7, a poem was presented to them by Mr. Roscoe, entitled, The wrongs of Africa. This poem which was well written was thankfully received. It begins thus:

“ Offspring of Love divine, Humanity!  
To whom, his eldest born, th’ Eternal gave  
Dominion o’er the heart; and taught to touch  
Its varied stops in sweetest unison;  
And strike the string that from a kindred breast  
Responsive vibrates! from the noisy haunts

Of mercantile confusion, where thy voice  
 Is heard not : from the meretricious glare  
 Of crowded theatres, where in thy place  
 Sits Sensibility, with wat'ry eye,  
 Dropping o'er fancied woes her useless tear ;—  
 Come thou, and weep with me substantial ills ;  
 And execrate the wrongs, that Afric's sons,  
 Torn from their natal shore, and doom'd to bear  
 The yoke of servitude in foreign climes,  
 Sustain. Nor vainly let our sorrows flow,  
 Nor let the strong emotion rise in vain ;  
 But may the kind contagion widely spread,  
 'Till in its flame the unrelenting heart  
 Of avarice melt in softest sympathy—  
 And one bright blaze of universal love  
 In grateful incense rises up to Heaven !

“ Form'd with the same capacity of pain,  
 The same desire of pleasure and of ease,  
 Why feels not man for man ! When nature shrinks  
 From the slight puncture of an insect's sting,  
 Faints, if not screen'd from sultry suns, and pines  
 Beneath the hardship of an hour's delay  
 Of needful nutriment ;—when Liberty  
 Is priz'd so dearly, that the slightest breath,  
 That ruffles but her mantle, can awake  
 To arms unwarlike nations, and can rouse  
 Confed'rate states to vindicate her claims :—  
 How shall the suff'rer man his fellow doom  
 To ills he mourns or spurns at ; tear with stripes  
 His quiv'ring flesh ; with hunger and with thirst  
 Waste his emaciate frame ; in ceaseless toils  
 Exhaust his vital powers ; and bind his limbs  
 In galling chains ! Shall he, whose fragile form  
 Demands continual blessings to support  
 Its complicated texture, air and food,  
 Raiment, alternate rest, and kindly skies,  
 And healthful seasons, dare with impious voice  
 To ask those mercies, whilst his selfish aim  
 Arrests the general freedom of their course ;  
 And, gratified beyond his utmost wish,  
 Debars another from the bounteous store !”

At this meeting the committee decided that they would define their object to be the abolition of the Slave-trade and not of the slavery which sprung from it. Hence, from this time, and in allusion to the month when this discussion took



place, they styled themselves in their different advertisements, and reports, though they were first associated in the month of May, The committee instituted in June 1787, for effecting the abolition of the Slave-trade. Thus, at the very outset, they took a ground which was for ever tenable. Thus they were enabled also to answer the objection, which was afterwards so constantly and so industriously circulated against them, that they were going to emancipate the slaves. And I have no doubt that this wise decision contributed greatly to their success ; for I am persuaded that, if they had adopted the other object, they could not for years to come, if ever, have succeeded in their attempt.

Before the committee broke up, I represented to them the necessity there was of obtaining further knowledge on all those individual points, which might be said to belong to the great subject of the abolition of the Slave-trade. In the first place, this knowledge was necessary for me, if I were to complete my work on the Impolicy of this trade, which work the summary view, just printed, had announced to the world. It would be necessary also, in case the Slave-trade should become a subject of parliamentary inquiry ; for this inquiry could not proceed without evidence. And if any time was peculiarly fit for the procuring of such information or evidence, it was the present. At this time the passions of men had not been heated by any public agitation of the question, nor had interest felt itself biassed to conceal the truth. But as soon as ever it should be publicly understood, that a parliamentary inquiry was certain, (which we ourselves believed would be the case, but which

interested men did not then know,) we should find many of the avenues to information closed against us. I proposed therefore that some one of the committee should undertake a journey to Bristol, Liverpool, and Lancaster, where he should reside for a time to collect further light upon this subject; and that if others should feel their occupations or engagements to be such as would make such a journey unsuitable, I would undertake it myself. I begged therefore the favour of the different members of the committee, to turn the matter over in their minds by the next meeting, that we might then talk over and decide upon the propriety of the measure.

The committee held its fourth meeting on the twelfth of June. Among the subjects, which were then brought forward, was that of the journey before mentioned. The propriety and indeed even the necessity of it was so apparent, that I was requested by all present to undertake it, and a minute for that purpose was entered upon our records. Of this journey, as gradually unfolding light on the subject, and as peculiarly connected with the promotion of our object, I shall now give an account; after which I shall return to the proceedings of the committee.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### *Proceedings of Committee.—Author's Journey.—Visits Bristol.*

HAVING made preparations for my journey, I took my leave of the different individuals of the committee. I called upon Mr. Wilberforce,

also, with the same design. He was then v  
ill, and in bed. Sir Richard Hill and oth  
were sitting by his bedside. After convers  
as much as he well could in his weak state,  
held out his hand to me, and wished me succ  
When I left him, I felt much dejected. It  
peared to me as if it would be in this case, a  
is often in that of other earthly things, that  
scarcely possess what we repute a treasure, w  
it is taken from us.

I determined to take this journey on ho  
back, not only on account of the relaxed s  
in which I found myself, after such close  
constant application, but because I wished  
have all my time to myself upon the road, in  
der the better to reflect upon the proper me  
of promoting this great cause. The first pl  
I resolved to visit was Bristol. According  
directed my course thither. On turning a  
ner, within about a mile of that city, at al  
eight in the evening, I came within sight o  
The weather was rather hazy, which occasio  
it to look of unusual dimensions. The bell  
some of the churches were then ringing;  
sound of them did not strike me, till I had t  
ed the corner before mentioned, when it c  
upon me at once. It filled me almost direc  
with a melancholy for which I could not  
count. I began now to tremble, for the  
time, at the arduous task I had undertaken  
attempting to subvert one of the branches of  
commerce of the great place which was t  
before me. I began to think of the host  
people I should have to encounter in it. I  
ticipated much persecution in it also; an  
questioned whether I should even get out o

alive. But in journeying on, I became more calm and composed. My spirits began to return. In these latter moments I considered my first feelings as useful, inasmuch as they impressed upon me the necessity of extraordinary courage, and activity, and perseverance, and of watchfulness, also, over my own conduct, that I might not throw any stain upon the cause I had undertaken. When, therefore, I entered the city, I entered it with an undaunted spirit, determining that no labour should make me shrink, nor danger, nor even persecution, deter me from my pursuit.

My first introduction was by means of a letter to Harry Gandy, who had then become one of the religious society of the Quakers. This introduction to him was particularly useful to me, for he had been a seafaring man. In his early youth he had been of a roving disposition; and, in order to see the world, had been two voyages in the Slave-trade, so that he had known the nature and practices of it. This enabled him to give me much useful information on the subject; and as he had frequently felt, as he grew up, deep affliction of mind for having been concerned in it, he was impelled to forward my views as much as possible under an idea that he should be thus making some reparation for the indiscreet and profane occupations of his youth.

The objects I had marked down as those to be attended to, were; to ascertain what were the natural productions of Africa, and, if possible to obtain specimens of them, with a view of forming a cabinet or collection; to procure as much information as I could, relative to the manner of obtaining slaves on the continent of

Africa, of transporting them to the West-Indies, and of treating them there ; to prevail upon persons, having a knowledge of any or all of these circumstances, to come forward to be examined as evidences before parliament, if such an examination should take place ; to make myself still better acquainted with the loss of seamen in the Slave-trade ; also with the loss of those who were employed in the other trades from the same port ; to know the nature, and quantity, and value of the imports and exports of goods in the former case : there were some other objects, which I classed under the head of Miscellaneous.

In my first movements about this city, I found that people talked very openly on the subject of the Slave-trade. They seemed to be well acquainted with the various circumstances belonging to it. There were facts, in short, in every body's mouth, concerning it ; and every body seemed to execrate it, though no one thought of its abolition. In this state of things I perceived that my course was obvious ; for I had little else to do, in pursuing two or three of my objects, than to trace the foundation of those reports which were in circulation.

On the third of July I heard that the ship *Brothers*, then lying in King-road for Africa, could not get her seamen, and that a party which had been put on board, becoming terrified by the prospect of their situation, had left her on Sunday morning. On inquiring further, I found that those who had navigated her on her last voyage, thirty-two of whom had died, had been so dreadfully used by the captain, that he could not get hands in the present. It was added, that *the treatment of seamen was a crying evil in this*

trade, and that consequently few would enter into it, so that there was at all times a great difficulty in procuring them, though they were ready enough to enter into other trades.

The relation of these circumstances made me acquainted with two things, of which I had not before heard; namely, the aversion of seamen to engage, and the bad usage of them when engaged, in this cruel trade; into both which I determined immediately to inquire.

I conceived that it became me to be very cautious about giving ear too readily to reports; and therefore, as I could easily learn the truth of one of the assertions which had been made to me, I thought it prudent to ascertain this, and to judge, by the discovery I should make concerning it, what degree of credit might be due to the rest. Accordingly, by means of my late friend, Truman Harford, the eldest son of the respectable family of that name, to which I have already mentioned myself to have been introduced, I gained access to the muster-roll of the ship *Brothers*. On looking over the names of her last crew, I found the melancholy truth confirmed, that thirty-two of them had been placed among the dead.

Having ascertained this circumstance, I became eager to inquire into the truth of the others, but more particularly of the treatment of one of the seamen, which, as it was reported to me, exceeded all belief. His name was John Dean; he was a black man, but free. The report was, that for a trifling circumstance, for which he was in nowise to blame, the captain had fastened him with his belly to the deck, and that, *in this situation*, he had poured hot pitch

upon his back, and made incisions in it with tongs.

Before, however, I attempted to learn the truth of this barbarous proceeding, I thought I would look into the ship's muster-roll, to see if I could find the name of such a man. On examining I found it to be the last on the list. John Donovan it appeared, had been one of the original crew having gone on board, from Bristol, on the twenty-second day of July, 1785.

• On inquiring where Dean was to be found my informant told me that he had lately left Bristol for London. I was shown, however, to the house where he had lodged. The name of the landlord was Donovan. On talking with him on the subject, he assured me that the report which I had heard was true; for that while he resided with him he had heard an account of his sufferings from some of his ship mates, and that he had often looked at his scarred and mutilated back.

On inquiring of Donovan if any other person in Bristol could corroborate this account, he referred me to a reputable tradesman living in the Market-place. Having been introduced to him he told me that he had long known John Donovan to be a sober and industrious man; that he had seen the terrible indentures on his back; that they were said to have been made by the captain, in the manner related, during his voyage.

While I was investigating this matter further I was introduced to Mr. Sydenham Teast, a respectable ship-builder in Bristol, and the owner of vessels trading to Africa in the natural productions of that country. I mentioned to him by accident what I had heard relative to

tment of John Dean. He said it was true. attorney\* in London had then taken up his case, in consequence of which the captain had been prevented from sailing, till he could find persons who would be answerable for the damages which might be awarded against him in a court of law. Mr. Teast further said, that, notwithstanding, at that time, the cruelty of the transaction to its full extent, he himself had been one of the securities for the captain at the request of the purser of the ship. Finding, however, afterwards, that it was as the public had stated, was sorry that he had ever interfered in such a barbarous case.

This transaction, which I now believed to be true, had the effect of preparing me for crediting whatever I might hear concerning the barbarities said to be practised in this trade. It kindled a fire of indignation within me, and proceeded in me both anxiety and spirit to proceed. That which excited these feelings the most, was the consideration, that the purser of this ship, knowing, as he did, of this act of cruelty, would have sent out this monster again. This, I thought, made me think that there was a system of bad usage to be deliberately practised upon the seamen in this employment, for some purpose other which I could then neither comprehend or ascertain.

But while I was in pursuit of this one object,

I afterwards found out this attorney. He described the transaction to me, as, by report, it had taken place, and informed that he had made the captain of the Brothers pay for his warranty.

The purser of a ship, at Bristol, is the person who manages the outfit, as well as the trade, and who is often in part owner of the vessel.



I was not unmindful of the others which I had marked out for myself. I had already procured an interview, as I have mentioned, with Mr. Sydenham Teast. I had done this with a view of learning from him what were the different productions of the continent of Africa, as far as he had been able to ascertain from the imports by his own vessels. He was very open and communicative. He had imported ivory, red-wood, cam-wood, and gum-copal. He purposed to import palm-oil. He observed that bees wax might be collected also upon the coast. Of his gum-copal he gave me a specimen. He furnished me also with two different specimens of unknown woods, which had the appearance of being useful. One of his captains, he informed me, had been told by the natives, that cotton, pink in the pod, grew in their country. He was of opinion, that many valuable productions might be found upon this continent.

Mr. Biggs, to whom I gained an introduction also, was in a similar trade with Mr. Teast; that is, he had one or two vessels, which skimmed, as it were, the coast and rivers, for what they could get of the produce of Africa, without having any concern in the trade for slaves. Mr. Biggs gave me a specimen of gum Senegal, of yellow wood, and of Mallaguetta and Cayenne pepper. He gave me also small pieces of cloth made and dyed by the natives, the colours of which they could only have obtained from materials in their own country. Mr. Biggs seemed to be assured, that if proper persons were sent to Africa on discovery, they would find a rich mine of wealth in the natural productions of it, and in none more advantageous to this as a man-

manufacturing nation, than in the many beautiful dyes which it might furnish.

From Thomas Bonville I collected two specimens of cloth made by the natives, and from others a beautiful piece of tulip wood, a small piece of wood similar to mahogany, and a sample of fine rice, all of which had been brought from the same continent.

Among the persons whom I found out at Bristol, and from whom I derived assistance, were Dr. Camplin, and the celebrated Dean Tucker. The former was my warm defender; for the West-Indian and African merchants, as soon as they discovered my errand, began to calumniate me. The Dean though in a very advanced age, felt himself much interested in my pursuit. He had long moved in the political world himself, and was desirous of hearing of what was going forward that was new in it, but particularly about so desirable a measure as that of the abolition of the Slave-trade.\* He introduced me to the Custom-house at Bristol. He used to call upon me at the Merchant's Hall, while I was transcribing the muster-rolls of the seamen there. In short, he seemed to be interested in all my movements. He became also a warm supporter both of me and of my cause.

Among others, who were useful to me in my pursuit was Mr. Henry Sulgar, an amiable minister of the gospel, belonging to the religious society of the Moravians in the same city. From him I first procured authentic documents relative

\* Dean Tucker, in his *Reflections on the Disputes between Great-Britain and Ireland*, published in 1785, had passed a severe censure on the British planters for the inhuman treatment of their slaves.

to the treacherous massacre at Calabar. This cruel transaction had been frequently mentioned to me; but as it had taken place twenty years before, I could not find one person who had been engaged in it, nor could I come, in a satisfactory manner, at the various particulars belonging to it. My friend, however, put me in possession of copies of the real depositions which had been taken in the case of the King against Lippi and others relative to this event, namely, of Captain Floyd, of the city of Bristol, who had been a witness to the scene, and of Ephraim Robin John, and of Ancona Robin John, African chiefs, who had been sufferers in the tragedy, of which they gave a circumstantial account, I shall present to the reader in as concise a manner as I can.

In the year 1767, the ships *Indian Queen*, *Duke of York*, *Nancy*, and *Concord*, of Bristol; the *Edgar*, of Liverpool, and the *Canterbury*, of London, lay in old Calabar river.

It happened at this time that a quarrel existed between the principal inhabitants of Old Town and those of New Town, Old Calabar, which had originated in a jealousy respecting the slaves. The captains of the vessels now mentioned joined in sending several letters to the inhabitants of Old Town, but particularly to Ephraim Robin John, who was at that time the grandee or principal inhabitant of the place. The tenour of these letters was, that they were sorry that any jealousy or quarrel should exist between the two parties; that if the inhabitants of Old Town would come on board, they would afford them security and protection; and at the same time, that their intention in invit-

m was, that they might become mediators, and thus heal their disputes.

The inhabitants of Old Town, happy to find that their differences were likely to be accommodated, joyfully accepted the invitation. The three brothers of the grandee just mentioned, the eldest of whom was Amboe Robin Jehn, entered their canoe, attended by twenty-five others, and, being followed by nine canoes, acted their course to the Indian Queen. They were dispatched from thence the next morning to the Edgar, and afterwards to the Duke of York, on board of which they went, leaving their canoe and attendants by the side of the same vessel. In the mean time the people on board the other canoes were either dispatched on board, or lying close to, the other vessels.

This being the situation of the three brothers, and of the principal inhabitants of the place, the mischief now began to appear. The crew of the Duke of York, aided by the captain and mates, and armed with pistols and cutlasses, rushed into the cabin, with an intent to seize the sons of their three innocent and unsuspecting hosts. The unhappy men, alarmed at this violation of the rights of hospitality, and struck with astonishment at the behaviour of their supposed friends, attempted to escape through the cabin windows, but being wounded were obliged to resist, and to submit to be put in irons.

In the same moment, in which this atrocious attempt had been made, an order had been given to fire upon the canoe, which was then lying by the side of the Duke of York. The canoe soon exploded and sunk, and the wretched attendants

were either seized, killed, or drowned. Most of the other ships followed the example. Great numbers were additionally killed and drowned on the occasion, and others were swimming to the shore.

At this juncture the inhabitants of New Town, who had concealed themselves in the bushes by the water side, and between whom and the commanders of the vessels the plan had been previously concerted, came out from their hiding-places, and, embarking in their canoes, made for such as were swimming from the fire of the ships. The ships' boats also were manned, and joined in the pursuit. They butchered the greatest part of those whom they caught. Many dead bodies were soon seen upon the sands, and others were floating upon the water; and including those who were seized and carried off, and those who were drowned and killed, either by the firing of the ships or by the people of New Town, three hundred were lost to the inhabitants of Old Town on that day.

The carnage, which I have been now describing, was scarcely over, when a canoe, full of the principal people of New Town, who had been the promoters of the scheme, dropped along-side of the Duke of York. They demanded the person of Amboe Robin John, the brother of the grandee of Old Town, and the eldest of the three on board. The unfortunate man put the palms of his hands together, and beseeched the commander of the vessel, that he would not violate the rights of hospitality by giving up an unoffending stranger to his enemies. But no entreaties could avail. The commander received from the New Town people a slave, o

the name of Econg, in his stead, and then forced him into the canoe, where his head was immediately struck off in the sight of the crew, and of his afflicted and disconsolate brothers. As for them, they escaped his fate; but they were carried off with their attendants to the West-Indies, and sold for slaves.

The knowledge of this tragical event now fully confirmed me in the sentiment, that the hearts of those, who were concerned in this traffic, became unusually hardened, and that I might readily believe any atrocities, however great, which might be related of them. It made also my blood boil as it were within me. It gave a new spring to my exertions. And I rejoiced, sorrowful as I otherwise was, that I had visited Bristol, if it had been only to gain an accurate statement of this one fact.

In pursuing my objects, I found that reports were current, that the crew of the Alfred slave-vessel, which had just returned, had been barbarously used, but particularly a young man of the name of Thomas, who had served as the surgeon's mate on board her. The report was, that he had been repeatedly knocked down by the captain; that he had become in consequence of his ill usage so weary of his life, that he had three times jumped overboard to destroy it; that on being taken up the last time he had been chained to the deck of the ship, in which situation he had remained night and day for some time; that in consequence of this his health had been greatly impaired; and that it was supposed he could not long survive this treatment.

It was with great difficulty, notwithstanding all my inquiries, that I could trace this person.

I discovered him, however, at last. He was confined to his bed when I saw him, and appeared to me to be delirious. I could collect nothing from himself relative to the particulars of his treatment. In his intervals of sense, he exclaimed against the cruelty both of the captain and of the chief mate, and pointing to his legs, thighs and body, which were all wrapped up in flannel, he endeavoured to convince me how much he had suffered there. At one time he said he forgave them. At another he asked, if I came to befriend him. At another he looked wildly, and asked if I meant to take the captain's part and to kill him.

I was greatly affected by the situation of this poor man, whose image haunted me both night and day, and I was meditating how most effectually to assist him, when I heard that he was dead.

I was very desirous of tracing something further on this subject, when Walter Chandler, of the society of the Quakers, who had been daily looking out for intelligence for me, brought a young man to me of the name of Dixon. He had been one of the crew of the same ship. He told me the particulars of the treatment of Thomas, with very little variation from those contained in the public report. After cross-examining him in the best manner I was able, I could find no inconsistency in his account.

I asked Dixon, how the captain came to treat the surgeon's mate in particular so ill. He said he had treated them all much alike. A person of the name of Bulpin, he believed, was the only one who escaped bad usage in the ship. With respect to himself, he had been cruelly

used so early as in the outward bound passage, which had occasioned him to jump overboard. When taken up he was put into irons, and kept in these for a considerable time. He was afterwards ill used at different times, and even so late as within three or four days of his return to port. For just before the *Alfred* made the island of Lundy, he was struck by the captain, who cut his under lip into two. He said that it had bled so much, that the captain expressed himself as if much alarmed; and having the expectation of arriving soon at Bristol, he had promised to make him amends, if he would hold his peace. This he said he had hitherto done, but he had received no recompense. In confirmation of his own usage, he desired me to examine his lip, which I had no occasion to do, having already preceived it, for the wound was apparently almost fresh.

I asked Dixon, if there was any person in Bristol, besides himself, who could confirm to me this his own treatment, as well as that of the other unfortunate man who was now dead. He referred me to a seaman of the name of Matthew Pyke. This person, when brought to me, not only related readily the particulars of the usage in both cases, as I have now stated them, but that which he received himself. He said that his own arm had been broken by the chief mate in *Black River*, Jamaica, and that he had also by the captain's orders, though contrary to the practice in merchant vessels, been severely flogged. His arm appeared to be then in pain. And I had a proof of the punishment by an inspection of his back.

I asked Matthew Pyke, if the crew in general



had been treated in a cruel manner. He replied, they had, except James Bulpin. I then asked where James Bulpin was to be found. He told me where he had lodged, but feared he had gone home to his friends in Somersetshire, I think somewhere in the neighbourhood of Bridgewater.

I thought it prudent to institute an inquiry into the characters of Thomas, Dixon, and Matthew Pyke, before I went further. The two former I found were strangers in Bristol, and I could collect nothing about them. The latter was a native of the place, had served his time as a seaman from the port, and was reputed of fair character.

My next business was to see James Bulpin. I found him just setting off for the country. He stopped, however, to converse with me. He was a young man of very respectable appearance and of mild manners. His appearance, indeed, gave me reason to hope that I might depend upon his statements; but I was most of all influenced by the consideration, that, never having been ill-used himself, he could have no inducement to go beyond the bounds of truth on this occasion. He gave me a melancholy confirmation of all the three cases. He told me also that one Joseph Cunningham had been a severe sufferer, and that there was reason to fear that Charles Horseler, another of the crew, had been so severely beaten over the breast with a knotted end of a rope (which end was of the size of a large ball, and had been made on purpose) that he died of it. To this he added, that it was now a notorious fact, that the captain of the *Alfred*, when mate of a slave-ship, had been tried at

Barbadoes for the murder of one of the crew, with whom he had sailed, but that he had escaped by bribing the principal witness to disappear.\*

The reader will see, the further I went into the history of this voyage, the more dismal it became. One miserable account, when examined, only brought up another. I saw no end to inquiry. The great question was, what was I to do? I thought the best thing would be to get the captain apprehended, and make him stand his trial either for the murder of Thomas or of Charles Horseler. I communicated with the late Mr. Burges, an eminent attorney and the deputy town-clerk, on this occasion. He had shown an attachment to me on account of the cause I had undertaken, and had given me privately assistance in it. I say privately; because, knowing the sentiments of many of the corporate body at Bristol, under whom he acted, he was fearful of coming forward in an open manner. His advice to me was, to take notes of the case for my own private conviction, but to take no public cognizance of it. He said that seamen, as soon as their wages were expended, must be off to sea again. They could not generally, as landsmen do, maintain themselves on shore. Hence I should be obliged to keep the whole crew at my own expense till the day of trial, which might not be for months to come. He doubted not, that, in the interim, the merchants and others would inveigle many of them away by making them boatswains and other in-

\* Mr. Sampson, who was surgeon's mate of the ship, in which the captain had thus served as a mate, confirmed to me afterwards this assertion, having often heard him boast in the cabin, "how he had tricked the law on that occasion."

feriour officers in some of their ships; so that, when the day of trial should come, I should find my witnesses dispersed and gone. He observed moreover, that, if any of the officers of the ship had any notion of going out again under the same owners.\* I should have all these against me. To which he added, that, if I were to make a point of taking up the cause of those whom I found complaining of hard usage in this trade, I must take up that of nearly all who sailed in it; for that he only knew of one captain from the port in the Slave-trade, who did not deserve long ago to be hanged. Hence I should get into a labyrinth of expense, and difficulty, and uneasiness of mind, from whence I should not easily find a clew to guide me.

This advice, though it was judicious, and founded on a knowledge of law proceedings, I found it very difficult to adopt. My own disposition was naturally such, that whatever I engaged in I followed with more than ordinary warmth. I could not be supposed therefore, affected and interested as I then was, to be cool and tranquil on this occasion. And yet what would my worthy friend have said, if in this first instance I had opposed him? I had a very

\*The seamen of the Alfred informed the purser of their ill usage. Matthew Pyke not only showed him his arm and his back, but acquainted him with the murder of Charles Horseler, stating that he had the instrument of his death in his possession. The purser seemed more alive to this than to any other circumstance, and wished to get it from him. Pyke, however, had given it to me. Now what will the reader think, when he is informed that the purser, after all this knowledge of the captain's cruelty, sent him out again, and that he was the same person, who was purser of the Brothers, and who had also sent out the captain of that ship a second time, as has been related, notwithstanding his barbarities in former voyages!!

severe struggle in my own feelings on this account. At length, though reluctantly, I obeyed. But as the passions, which agitate the human mind, when it is greatly inflamed, must have a vent somewhere, or must work off as it were, or in working together must produce some new passion or effect; so I found the rage, which had been kindling within me, subsiding into the most determined resolutions of future increased activity and perseverance. I began now to think that the day was not long enough for me to labour in. I regretted often the approach of night, which suspended my work, and I often welcomed that of the morning, which restored me to it. When I felt myself weary, I became refreshed by the thought of what I was doing; when disconsolate, I was comforted by it. I lived in hope that every day's labour would furnish me with that knowledge, which would bring this evil nearer to its end; and I worked on, under these feelings, regarding neither trouble nor danger in the pursuit.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Author confers with the inhabitants of Bridgewater relative to a petition to parliament in behalf of the abolition—returns to Bristol—discovers a scandalous mode of procuring seamen for the Slave-trade—and of paying them—makes a comparative view of their loss in this and in other trades—procures imports and exports—examines the construction and admeasurement of Slave-ships—of the Fly and Neptune—Difficulty of procuring evidence—Case of Gardiner of the Pilgrim—of Arnold of the Ruby—some particulars of the latter in his former voyages.*

HAVING heard by accident, that the inhabitants of the town of Bridgewater had sent a petition to the House of Commons, in the year 1785, for the abolition of the Slave-trade, as has been related in a former part of the work, I determined, while my feelings were warm, to go there, and to try to find out those who had been concerned in it, and to confer with them as the tried friends of the cause. The time seemed to me to be approaching, when the public voice should be raised against this enormous evil. I was sure that it was only necessary for the inhabitants of this favoured island to know it, to feel a just indignation against it. Accordingly I set off. My friend George Fisher, who was before mentioned to have been of the religious society of the Quakers, gave me an introduction to the respectable family of Ball, which was of the same religious persuasion. I called upon

Messrs. Sealey, Anstice, Crandon, Chubb, and  
 others. I laid open to those, whom I saw, the  
 discoveries I had made relative to the loss and  
 treatment of seamen; at which they seemed  
 to be much moved; and it was agreed, that, if it  
 could be thought a proper measure, (of which I  
 could inform them when I had consulted the  
 committee,) a second petition should be sent to  
 parliament from the inhabitants, praying for the  
 abolition of the Slave-trade. With this view I  
 left them several of my Summary Views, before  
 mentioned, to distribute, that the inhabitants  
 might know more particularly the nature of the  
 evil, against which they were going to complain.  
 On my return to Bristol, I determined to inquire  
 into the truth of the reports that seamen had an  
 option to enter, and that they were inveigled,  
 not often forced, into this hateful employment.  
 For this purpose I was introduced to a landlord  
 of the name of Thompson, who kept a public  
 house called the Seven Stars. He was a very  
 intelligent man, was accustomed to receive  
 sailors, when discharged at the end of their  
 voyages, and to board them till their vessels went  
 out again, or to find them births in others. He  
 avoided however all connexion with the Slave-  
 trade, declaring that the credit of his house  
 could be ruined, if he were known to send  
 those into it who put themselves under his care.  
 From him I collected the truth of all that had  
 been stated to me on this subject. But I told  
 him I should not be satisfied until I had beheld  
 those scenes myself, which he had described to  
 me; and I entreated him to take me into them,  
 saying that I would reward him for all his time  
 and trouble, and that I would never forget him

while I lived. To this he consented; and as three or four slave-vessels at this time were preparing for their voyages, it was time that we should begin our rounds. At about twelve at night we generally set out, and were employed till two and sometimes three in the morning. He led me from one of those public houses to another, which the mates of the slave-vessels used to frequent to pick up their hands. These houses were in Marsh-street, and most of them were then kept by Irishmen. The scenes witnessed in these houses were truly distressing to me; and yet, if I wished to know practically what I had purposed, I could not avoid them. Music, dancing, rioting, drunkenness, and profane swearing, were kept up from night to night. The young mariner, if a stranger to the port and unacquainted with the nature of the Slave trade, was sure to be picked up. The novelty of the voyages, the superiority of the wages in this over any other trades, and the privileges of various kinds, were set before him. Gulled in this manner he was frequently enticed to the boat, which was waiting to carry him away. If these prospects did not attract him, he was plied with liquor till he became intoxicated, when a bargain was made over him between the landlord and the mate. After this his senses were kept in such a constant state of stupefaction by the liquor, that in time, the former might do with him what he pleased. Seamen also were boarded in these houses, who, when the slave-ships were going out, but at no other time, were encouraged to spend more than they had money to pay for; and to these, when they had thus exceeded, but one alternative was given, namely, a slave-vesse

in jail. These distressing scenes I found myself obliged frequently to witness, for I was less than nineteen times occupied in making the hateful rounds. And I can say from my experience, and all the information I could extract from Thompson and others, that no such practices were in use to obtain seamen for other vessels.

The treatment of the seamen employed in the slave-trade had so deeply interested me, and the manner of procuring them, that I was determined to make myself acquainted with the whole history; for I found by report, that they were not only personally ill treated, as I have already painfully described, but that they were robbed by artifice of those wages, which had been held up to them as so superiour in this trade. All persons were obliged to sign articles, that, in case they should die or be discharged during the voyage, the wages then due to them should be paid in the currency where the vessel traded her slaves, and that half of the wages due to them on their arrival there should be paid in the same manner, and that they were never permitted to read over the articles they had signed. By means of this iniquitous practice the wages in the Slave-trade, though nominally higher in order to induce seamen to engage in it, were actually lower than in other trades. In these usages I ascertained in such a manner, that no person could doubt the truth of them. I actually obtained possession of articles of agreement belonging to these vessels, which had been signed and executed in former voyages. I sent the merchants, themselves, by sending the seamen, who had claims upon them, to



ask for their accounts current with their respective ships, furnish me with such documents as would have been evidence against them in any court of law. On whatever branch of the system I turned my eyes, I found it equally barbarous. The trade was, in short, one mass of iniquity from the beginning to the end.

I employed myself occasionally in the Merchants Hall, in making copies of the muster-rolls of ships sailing to different parts of the world, that I might make a comparative view of the loss of seamen in the Slave-trade, with that of those in the other trades from the same port. The result of this employment showed me the importance of it : for, when I considered how partial the inhabitants of this country were to their fellow-citizens, the seamen belonging to it, and in what estimation the members of the legislature held them, by enforcing the Navigation Act, which they considered to be the bulwark of the nation, and by giving bounties to certain trades, that these might become so many nurseries for the marine, I thought it of great importance to be able to prove, as I was then capable of doing, that more persons would be found dead in three slave-vessels from Bristol, in a given time, than in all the other vessels put together, numerous as they were, belonging to the same port.

I procured also an account of the exports and imports for the year 1786, by means of which I was enabled to judge of the comparative value of this and the other trades.

In pursuing another object, which was that of going on board the slave-ships, and learning their construction and dimensions, I was greatly struck, and indeed affected, by the appearance

of two little sloops, which were fitting out for Africa, the one of only twenty-five tons, which was said to be destined to carry seventy; and the other of only eleven, which was said to be destined to carry thirty slaves. I was told also that which was more affecting, namely, that these were not to act as tenders on the coast, by going up and down the rivers, and receiving three or four slaves at a time, and then carrying them to a large ship, which was to take them to the West-Indies, but that it was actually intended, that they should transport their own slaves themselves; that one if not both of them were, on their arrival in the West-Indies, to be sold as pleasure vessels, and that the seamen belonging to them were to be permitted to come home by what is usually called the run.

In pursuing my different objects there was one, which, to my great vexation, I found it extremely difficult to attain. This was the procuring of any assurance from those, who had been personally acquainted with the horrors of this trade, that they would appear, if called upon, as evidence against it. My friend Harry Gandy, to whom I had been first introduced, had been two voyages, as I before mentioned; and he was willing, though at an advanced age, to go to London, to state publicly all he knew concerning them. But with respect to the many others in Bristol, who had been to the coast of Africa, I had not yet found one, who would come forward for this purpose. There were several old slave captains living there, who had a great knowledge of the subject. I thought it not unreasonable, that I might gain one or two good evidences out of these, as they had probably

long ago left the concern, and were not now interested in the continuance of it. But all endeavours were fruitless. I sent messages to them by different persons. I met them in all ways. I stated to them, that if there was nothing objectionable in the trade, seeing it laboured under such a stigma, they had an opportunity of coming forward and of wiping away the stain. On the other hand, it was as bad as representations then they had it in their power, by detailing the crimes which attached to it, of making some reparation, or atonement, for the part they had taken in it. But no representations would do. All intercourse was positively forbidden between us; and whenever they met me in the street they shunned me as if I had been a mad dog. I could not for some time account for the strange disposition which they thus manifested towards me; but my friends helped me to unravel it. I was assured that one or two of them, though they went no longer to Africa as captains, were in part owners of vessels trading there; and with respect to all of them, it might be generally said, that they had been guilty of such enormities, that they would be afraid of coming forward in the way I proposed, lest any thing should come out by which they might criminate themselves. I was obliged then to give up all hope of getting any evidence from this quarter, and I saw but little prospect of getting it from those, who were then actually deriving their livelihood from the trade. And yet I was determined to persevere. For I thought that some might be found in it, who were not yet so hardened as to be incapable of being awakened on this subject. I thought that others might be found in it, who

wished to leave it upon principle, and that these would unbosom themselves to me. And I thought it not improbable that I might fall in with others, who had come unexpectedly into a state of independence, and that these might be induced, as their livelihood would be no longer affected by giving me information, to speak the truth.

I persevered for weeks together under this hope, but could find no one of all those, who had been applied to, who would have any thing to say to me. At length Walter Chandler had prevailed upon a young gentleman, of the name of Gardiner, who was going out as surgeon of the Pilgrim, to meet me. The condition was, that we were to meet at the house of the former, but that we were to enter in and go out at different times, that is, we were not to be seen together.

Gardiner, on being introduced to me said at once, that he had often wished to see me on the subject of my errand, but that the owner of the Pilgrim had pointed me out to him as a person, whom he would wish him to avoid. He then laid open to me the different methods of obtaining slaves in Africa, as he had learned from those on board his own vessel in his first, or former, voyage. He unfolded also the manner of their treatment in the Middle Passage, with the various distressing scenes which had occurred in it. He stated the barbarous usage of the seamen as he had witnessed it, and concluded by saying, that there never was a subject, which demanded so loudly the interference of the legislature as that of the Slave-trade.

When he had finished his narrative, and an-

swered the different questions which I had proposed to him concerning it, I asked him in as delicate a manner as I could, how it happened, that seeing the trade in this horrible light, he had consented to follow it again? He told me frankly, that he had received a regular medical education, but that his relations, being poor, had not been able to set him up in his profession. He had saved a little money in his last voyage. In that, which he was now to perform, he hoped to save a little more. With the profits of both voyages together, he expected he should be able to furnish a shop in the line of his profession, when he would wipe his hands of this detestable trade.

I then asked him, whether upon the whole he thought he had judged prudently, or whether the prospect of thus enabling himself to become independent, would counterbalance the uneasiness which might arise in future? He replied, that he had not so much to fear upon this account. The trade, while it continued, must have surgeons. But it made a great difference both to the crew and to the slaves, whether these discharged their duty towards them in a feeling manner, or not. With respect to himself, he was sure that he should pay every attention to the wants of each. This thought made his continuance in the trade for one voyage longer more reconcilable. But he added, as if not quite satisfied, "Cruel necessity!" and he fetched a deep sigh.

We took our leave, and departed, the one a few minutes after the other. The conversation of this young man was very interesting. I was much impressed both by the nature and the

manner of it. I wished to secure him, if possible, as an evidence for Parliament, and thus save him from his approaching voyage: but I knew not what to do. At first, I thought it would be easy to raise a subscription to set him up. But then, I was aware that this might be considered as bribery, and make his testimony worth nothing. I then thought that the committee might detain him as an evidence, and pay him, in a reasonable manner, for his sustenance, till his testimony should be called for. But I did not know how long it would be before his examination might take place. It might be a year or two. I foresaw other difficulties also; and I was obliged to relinquish what otherwise I should have deemed a prize.

On reviewing the conversation which had passed between us after my return home, I thought, considering the friendly disposition of Gardiner towards us, I had not done all I could for the cause; and, communicating my feelings to Walter Chandler, he procured me another interview. At this, I asked him, if he would become an evidence, if he lived to return. He replied, very heartily, that he would. I then asked him, if he would keep a journal of facts during his voyage, as it would enable him to speak more correctly, in case he should be called upon for his testimony. He assured me, he would, and that he would make up a little book for that purpose. I asked him, lastly, when he meant to sail. He said, as soon as the ship could get all her hands. It was the intention to sail to morrow, but that seven men, whom the mates had brought drunk out of Marsh-street the evening before, were so terrified when they

found they were going to Africa, that they had seized the boat that morning, and had put themselves on shore. I took my leave of him, entreating him to follow his resolutions of kindness both to the sailors and the slaves, and wished him a speedy and a safe return.

On going one day by the Exchange, after this interview with Gardiner, I overheard a young gentleman say to another, "that it happened on the coast, last year, and that he saw it." I wished to know who he was, and to get at him if I could. I watched him at a distance for more than half an hour, when I saw him leave his companion. I followed him till he entered a house. I then considered whether it would be proper, and in what manner, to address him when he should come out of it. But I waited three hours, and I never saw him. I then concluded that he either lodged where I saw him enter, or that he had gone to dine with some friend. I therefore took notice of the house, and, showing it afterwards to several of my friends, desired them to make him out for me. In a day or two I had an interview with him. His name was James Arnold. He had been two voyages to the coast of Africa for slaves; one as surgeon's mate in the *Alexander*, in the year 1785, and the other as surgeon in the *Little Pearl*, in the year 1786, from which he had not then very long returned.

I asked him if he was willing to give me any account of these voyages, for that I was making an inquiry into the nature of the Slave-trade. He replied, he knew that I was. He had been cautioned about falling in with me. He had,

however, taken no pains to avoid me. It was a bad trade, and ought to be exposed.

I went over the same ground as I had gone with Gardiner relative to the first of these voyages, or that in the *Alexander*. It is not necessary to detail the particulars. It is impossible, however, not to mention, that the treatment of the seamen on board this vessel was worse than I had ever before heard of. No less than eleven of them, unable to bear their lives, had deserted at Bonny on the coast of Africa, which is a most unusual thing, choosing all that could be endured, though in a most inhospitable climate, and in the power of the natives, rather than to continue in their own ship. Nine others also, in addition to the loss of these, had died in the same voyage. As to the rest, he believed, without any exception, that they had been badly used.

In examining him with respect to his second voyage, or that in the *Little Pearl*, two circumstances came out with respect to the slaves, which I shall relate in few words.

The chief mate used to beat the men-slaves on very trifling occasions. About eleven one evening, the ship then lying off the coast, he heard a noise in their room. He jumped down among them with a lanthorn in his hand. Two of those, who had been ill used by him, forced themselves out of their irons, and, seizing him, struck him with the bolt of them, and it was with some difficulty that he was extricated from them by the crew.

The men-slaves, unable now to punish him, and finding they had created an alarm, began to proceed to extremities. They endeavoured to



force themselves up the gratings, and to pull down a partition which had been made for a sick birth; when they were fired upon and repressed. The next morning they were brought up one by one; when it appeared that a boy had been killed, who was afterwards thrown into the sea.

The two men, however, who had forced themselves out of irons, did not come up with the rest, but found their way into the hold, and armed themselves with knives from a cask, which had been opened for trade. One of them being called to in the African tongue by a black trader, who was then on board, came up, but with a knife in each hand; when one of the crew, supposing him yet hostile, shot him in the right side, and killed him on the spot.

The other remained in the hold for twelve hours. Scalding water mixed with fat was poured down upon him, to make him come up. Though his flesh was painfully blistered by these means, he kept below. A promise was then made to him in the African tongue by the same trader, that no injury should be done him, if he would come among them. To this at length he consented. But on observing, when he was about half way up, that a sailor was armed between decks, he flew to him, and clasped him, and threw him down. The sailor fired his pistol in the scuffle, but without effect. He contrived however to fracture his skull with the but end of it, so that the slave died on the third day.

The second circumstance took place after the arrival of the same vessel at St. Vincent's. There was a boy slave on board, who was very ill and *emaciated*. The mate, who, by his cruelty, had

been the author of the former mischief, did not choose to expose him to sale with the rest, lest the small sum he would fetch in that situation should lower the average price, and thus bring down\* the value of the privileges of the officers of the ship. This boy was kept on board, and no provisions allowed him. The mate had suggested the propriety of throwing him overboard, but no one would do it. On the ninth day he expired, having never been allowed any sustenance during that time.

I asked Mr. Arnold if he was willing to give evidence of these facts in both cases. He said he had only one objection, which was, that in two or three days he was to go in the *Ruby*, on his third voyage: but on leaving me, he said that he would take an affidavit, before the mayor, of the truth of any of those things which he had related to me, if that would do; but, from motives of safety, he should not choose to do this till within a few hours before he sailed.

In two or three days after this, he sent for me. He said the *Ruby* would leave King-road the next day, and that he was ready to do as he had promised. Depositions were accordingly made out from his own words.

On taking my leave of him, I asked him how he could go a third time in such a barbarous employ. He said he had been distressed. In his voyage in the *Alexander* he had made nothing; for he had been so ill used, that he had solicited

\* Officers are said to be allowed the privilege of one or more slaves, according to their rank. When the cargo is sold, the sum total fetched, is put down, and this being divided by the number of slaves sold, gives the average price of each. Such officers, then, receive this average price for one or more slaves, according to their privileges, but never the slaves themselves.

his discharge in Granada, where, being paid in currency, he had but little to receive. When he arrived in Bristol from that Island, he was quite penniless; and finding the Little Pearl going out, he was glad to get on board her as her surgeon, which he then did entirely for the sake of bread. He said, moreover, that she was but a small vessel, and that his savings had been but small in her. This occasioned him to apply for the Ruby, his present ship; but if he survived this voyage he would never go another. I then put the same question to him as to Gardiner, and he promised to keep a journal of facts and to give his evidence, if called upon, on his return.

The reader will see, from this account, the difficulty I had in procuring evidence from this port. The owners of vessels employed in the trade there, forbade all intercourse with me. The old captains, who had made their fortunes in it, would not see me. The young, who were making them, could not be supposed to espouse my cause, to the detriment of their own interest. Of those whose necessities made them go into it for a livelihood, I could not get one to come forward, without doing so much for him as would have amounted to bribery. Thus, when I got one of these into my possession, I was obliged to let him go again. I was, however, greatly consoled by the consideration, that I had procured two sentinels to be stationed in the enemy's camp, who keeping a journal of different facts, would bring me some important intelligence at a future period.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Author is introduced to Alexander Falconbridge—takes one of the mates of the Africa out of that ship—visits disabled seamen from the ship Thomas—puts a chief mate into prison for the murder of William Lines—Ill usage of seamen in various other slave-vessels—secures Crutwell's Bath paper in favour of the abolition—lays the foundation of a committee at Bristol—and of a petition from thence also—takes his leave of that city.*

By this time I began to feel the effect of my labours upon my constitution. It had been my practice to go home in the evening to my lodgings, about twelve o'clock, and then to put down the occurrences of the day. This usually kept me up till one, and sometimes till nearly two in the morning. When I went my rounds in Marsh-street, I seldom got home till two, and into bed till three. My clothes, also, were frequently wet through with the rains. The cruel accounts I was daily in the habit of hearing, both with respect to the slaves, and to the seamen employed in this wicked trade, from which, indeed, my mind had no respite, often broke my sleep in the night, and occasioned me to awake in an agitated state. All these circumstances concurred in affecting my health.

While in Bristol, my friends had procured for me an interview with Mr. Alexander Falconbridge, who had been to the coast of Africa, as

a surgeon, for four voyages; one in the *Tartar*, another in the *Alexander*, and two in the *Emilia* slave-vessels.

On my introduction to him, I asked him if he had any objection to give me an account of the cruelties, which were said to be connected with the Slave-trade. He answered, without any reserve, that he had not; for that he had now done with it. Never were any words more welcome to my ears than these, "Yes; I have done with the trade,"—and he said also, that he was free to give me information concerning it. Was he not then one of the very persons, whom I had so long been seeking, but in vain?

To detail the accounts which he gave me at this and at subsequent interviews, relative to the different branches of this trade, would fill no ordinary volume. Suffice it to say in general terms, as far as relates to the slaves, that he confirmed the various violent and treacherous methods of procuring them in their own country; their wretched condition, in consequence of being crowded together, in the passage; their attempts to rise in defence of their own freedom, and when this was impracticable, to destroy themselves by the refusal of sustenance, by jumping overboard into the sea, and in other ways; the effect also of their situation upon their minds, by producing insanity and various diseases; and the cruel manner of disposing of them in the West-Indies, and of separating relatives and friends.

There was one circumstance of peculiar importance, but quite new to me, which I collected from the information which Mr. Falconbridge had given me. This was, that many of the sea-

men, who left the slave-ships in the West-Indies were in such a weak, ulcerated, and otherwise diseased state, that they perished there. Several also of those who came home with the vessels, were in the same deplorable condition. This was the case, Mr. Falconbridge said, with some who returned in the *Alexander*. It was the case also with many others; for he had been a pupil, for twelve months, in the Bristol Infirmary, and had had ample means of knowing the fact. The greatest number of seamen, at almost all times, who were there, were from the slave-vessels. These, too, were usually there on account of disease, whereas those from other ships were usually there on account of accidents. The health of some of the former was so far destroyed, that they were never wholly to be restored. This information was of great importance; for it showed that they who were reported dead upon the muster-rolls, were not all that were lost to the country by the prosecution of this wicked trade. Indeed, it was of so much importance, that in all my future interviews with others, which were for the purpose of collecting evidence, I never forgot to make it a subject of inquiry.

I can hardly say how precious I considered the facts with which Mr. Falconbridge had furnished me from his own experience, relative to the different branches of this commerce. They were so precious, that I began now to be troubled lest I should lose them. For, though he had thus privately unbosomed himself to me, it did not follow that he would come forward as a public evidence. I was not a little uneasy on this account. I was fearful lest, when I should get

this question to him, his future plan of life, or some little narrow consideration of future interest, would prevent him from giving his testimony, and I delayed asking him for many days. During this time, however, I frequently visited him; and at length, when I thought I was better acquainted, and probably in some little estimation with him, I ventured to open my wishes on this subject. He answered me boldly, and at once, that he had left the trade upon principle, and that he would state all he knew concerning it, either publicly or privately, and at any time when he should be called upon to do it. This answer produced such an effect upon me, after all my former disappointments, that I felt it all over my frame. It operated like a sudden shock, which often disables the impressed person for a time. So the joy I felt rendered me quite useless, as to business, for the remainder of the day.

I began to perceive in a little time the advantage of having cultivated an acquaintance with Thompson of the Seven Stars. For nothing could now pass in Bristol, relative to the seamen employed in this trade, but it was soon brought to me. If there was any thing amiss, I had so arranged matters that I was sure to hear of it. He sent for me one day to inform me that several of the seamen, who had been sent out of Marsh-street into the Prince, which was then at Kingroad, and on the point of sailing to Africa for slaves, had, through fear of ill usage on the voyage, taken the boat and put themselves on shore. He informed me at the same time that the seamen of the Africa, which was lying there also and ready to sail on a like voyage, were not satisfied, for that they had been made

to sign their articles of agreement, without being permitted to see them. To this he added that Mr. Sheriff, one of the mates of the latter vessel, was unhappy also on this account. Sheriff had been a mate in the West-India trade, and was a respectable man in his line. He had been enticed by the captain of the Africa, under the promise of peculiar advantages, to change his voyage. Having a wife and family at Bristol, he was willing to make a sacrifice on their account. But when he himself was not permitted to read the articles, he began to suspect bad work, and that there would be nothing but misery in the approaching voyage. Thompson entreated me to extricate him, if I could. He was sure, he said, if he went to the coast with that man, meaning the captain, that he would never return alive.

I was very unwilling to refuse any thing to Thompson. I was deeply bound to him in gratitude for the many services he had rendered me, but I scarcely saw how I could serve him on this occasion. I promised, however, to speak to him in an hour's time. I consulted my friend Truman Harford in the interim; and the result was, that he and I should proceed to King-road in a boat, go on board the Africa, and charge the captain in person with what he had done, and desire him to discharge Sheriff, as no agreement, where fraud or force was used in the signatures, could be deemed valid. If we were not able to extricate Sheriff by these means, we thought that at least we should know, by inquiring of those whom we should see on board, whether the measure of hindering the men from seeing their articles on signing them had been



adopted. It would be useful to ascertain this, because such a measure had been long reported to be usual in this, but was said to be unknown in any other trade.

Having passed the river's mouth and rowed towards the sea, we came near the Prince first, but pursued our destination to the Africa. Mr. Sheriff was the person who received us on board. I did not know him till I asked his name. I then told him my errand, with which he seemed to be much pleased. On asking him to tell the captain that I wished to speak with him, he replied that he was on shore. This put me to great difficulty, as I did not know then what to do. I consulted with Truman Harford, and it was our opinion, that we should inquire of the seamen, but in a very quiet manner, by going individually to each, if they had ever demanded to see the articles on signing them, and if they had been refused. We proposed this question to them. They replied, that the captain had refused them in a savage manner, making use of threats and oaths. There was not one contradictory voice on this occasion. We then asked Mr. Sheriff what we were to do. He entreated us by all means to take him on shore. He was sure that under such a man as the captain, and particularly after the circumstance of our coming on board should be made known to him, he would never come from the coast of Africa alive. Upon this, Truman Harford called me aside, and told me the danger of taking an officer from the ship; for that, if any accident should happen to her, the damage might all fall upon me. I then inquired of Mr. Sheriff if *there* was any officer on board, who could man-

age the ship. He pointed one out to me, and I spoke to him in the cabin. This person told me I need be under no apprehension about the vessel, but that every one would be sorry to lose Mr. Sheriff. Upon this ground, Truman Harford, who had felt more for me than for himself, became now easy. We had before concluded, that the obtaining any signature by fraud or force would render the agreement illegal. We therefore joined in opinion, that we might take away the man. His chest was accordingly put into our boat. We jumped into it with our rowers, and he followed us, surrounded by the seamen, all of whom took an affectionate leave of him, and expressed their regret at parting. Soon after this there was a general cry of "Will you take me too?" from the deck; and such a sudden movement appeared there, that we were obliged to push off directly from the side, fearing that many would jump into our boat and go with us.

After having left the ship, Sheriff corroborated the desertion of the seamen from the Prince, as before related to me by Thompson. He spoke also of the savage disposition of his late captain, which he had even dared to manifest though lying in an English port. I was impressed by this account of his rough manners; and the wind having risen before and the surf now rolling heavily, I began to think what an escape I might have had; how easy it would have been for the savage captain, if he had been on board, or for any one at his instigation, to have pushed me over the ship's side. This was the first time I had ever considered the peril of the undertaking. But we arrived safe; and though on the same

evening I left my name at the captain's house, as that of the person who had taken away his mate, I never heard more about it.

In pursuing my inquiries into the new topic suggested by Mr. Falconbridge, I learnt that two or three of the seamen of the ship *Thomas*, which had been arrived now nearly a year from the Coast, were in a very crippled and deplorable state. I accordingly went to see them. One of them had been attacked by a fever, arising from circumstances connected with these voyages. The inflammation, which had proceeded from it, had reached his eyes. It could not be dispersed; and the consequence was, that he was then blind. The second was lame. He had badly ulcerated legs, and appeared to be very weak. The third was a mere spectre. I think he was the most pitiable object I ever saw. I considered him as irrecoverably gone. They all complained to me of their bad usage on board the *Thomas*. They said they had heard of my being in Bristol, and they hoped I would not leave it, without inquiring into the murder of William Lines.

On inquiring who William Lines was, they informed me that he had been one of the crew of the same ship, and that all on board believed that he had been killed by the chief mate; but they themselves had not been present when the blows were given him. They had not seen him till afterwards; but their shipmates had told them of his cruel treatment, and they knew that soon afterwards he had died.

In the course of the next day, the mother of Lines, who lived in Bristol, came to me and related the case. I told her there was no evidence

as to the fact, for that I had seen three seamen, who could not speak to it from their own knowledge. She said there were four others then in Bristol who could. I desired her to fetch them. When they arrived I examined each separately, and cross-examined them in the best manner I was able. I could find no variation in their account, and I was quite convinced that the murder had taken place. The mother was then importunate that I should take up the case. I was too much affected by the narration I had heard to refuse her wholly, and yet I did not promise that I would. I begged a little time to consider of it. During this I thought of consulting my friend Burges. But I feared he would throw cold water upon it, as he had done in the case of the captain of the *Alfred*. I remembered well what he had then said to me, and yet I felt a strong disposition to proceed. For the trade was still going on. Every day, perhaps, some new act of barbarity was taking place. And one example, if made, might counteract the evil for a time. I seemed therefore to incline to stir in this matter, and thought, if I should get into any difficulty about it, it would be better to do it without consulting Mr. Burges, than, after having done it, to fly as it were in his face. I then sent for the woman, and told her, that she might appear with the witnesses at the Common Hall, where the magistrates usually sat on a certain day.

We all met at the time appointed, and I determined to sit as near to the mayor as I could get. The hall was unusually crowded. One or two slave-merchants, and two or three others, who were largely concerned in the West-India trade,

were upon the bench. For I had informed the mayor the day before of my intention, and he, it appeared, had informed them. I shall never forget the savage looks which these people gave me; which indeed were so remarkable, as to occasion the eyes of the whole court to be turned upon me. They looked as if they were going to speak to me, and the people looked as if they expected me to say something in return. They then got round the mayor, and began to whisper to him, as I supposed, on the business before it should come on. One of them, however, said aloud to the former, but fixing his eyes upon me, and wishing me to overhear him, "Scandalous reports had lately been spread, but sailors were not used worse in Guineamen than in other vessels." This brought the people's eyes upon me again. I was very much irritated, but I thought it improper to say any thing. Another, looking savagely at me, said to the mayor, "that he had known captain Vicars a long time; that he was an honourable man,\* and would not allow such usage in his ship. There were always vagabonds to hatch up things:" and he made a dead point at me, by putting himself into a posture which attracted the notice of those present, and by staring me in the face. I could now no longer restrain myself, and I said aloud in as modest a manner as I could, "You, Sir, may

\* We may well imagine what this person's notion of another man's honour was; for he was the purser of the Brothers and of the Alfred, who, as before mentioned, sent the captains of those ships out a second voyage, after knowing their barbarities in the former. And he was also the purser of this very ship Thomas, where the murder had been committed. I by no means, however, wish by these observations to detract from the character of captain Vicars, as he had no concern in the cruel deed.

know many things which I do not. But this I know, that if you do not do your duty, you are amenable to a higher court." The mayor upon this looked at me, and directly my friend Mr. Burges, who was sitting as the clerk to the magistrates, went to him and whispered something in his ear; after which all private conversation between the mayor and others ceased, and the hearing was ordered to come on.

I shall not detain the reader by giving an account of the evidence which then transpired. The four witnesses were examined and the case was so far clear. Captain Vicars, however, was sent for. On being questioned, he did not deny that there had been bad usage, but said that the young man had died with the flux. But this assertion went for nothing when balanced against the facts which had come out; and this was so evident, that an order was made out for the apprehension of the chief mate. He was accordingly taken up. The next day, however, there was a rehearing of the case, when he was returned to the jail, where he was to lie till the Lords of the Admiralty should order a sessions to be held for the trial of offences committed on the high seas.

This public examination of the case of William Lines, and the way in which it ended, produced an extraordinary result; for after this time the slave-captains and mates, who used to meet me suddenly, used as suddenly to start from me, indeed to the other side of the pavement, as if I had been a wolf, or tiger, or some dangerous beast of prey. Such of them as saw me before hand, used to run up the cross streets or lanes, which were nearest to them, to get away. Sea-

men, too, came from various quarters to apply to me for redress. One came to me, who had been treated ill in the *Alexander*, when Mr. Falconbridge had been the surgeon of her. Three came to me, who had been ill used in the voyage which followed, though she had then sailed under a new captain. Two applied to me from the *Africa*, who had been of her crew in the last voyage; two from the *Fly*; two from the *Wasp*; one from the *Little Pearl*, and three from the *Pilgrim* or *Princess*, when she was last upon the coast.

The different scenes of barbarity, which these represented to me, greatly added to the affliction of my mind. My feelings became now almost insupportable. I was agonized to think that this trade should last another day. I was in a state of agitation from morning till night. I determined I would soon leave Bristol. I saw nothing but misery in the place. I had collected now, I believed, all the evidence it would afford; and to stay in it a day longer than was necessary, would be only an interruption for so much time both of my happiness and of my health. I determined therefore to do only two or three things, which I thought to be proper, and to depart in a few days.

And first I went to Bath, where I endeavoured to secure the respectable paper belonging to that city in favour of the abolition of the Slave-trade. This I did entirely to my satisfaction, by relating to the worthy editor all the discoveries I had made, and by impressing his mind in a forcible manner on the subject. And it is highly to the honour of Mr. Crutwell, that from that day he never ceased to defend our cause; that he never made a charge for insertions of any kind; but

that he considered all he did upon this occasion in the light of a duty, or as his mite given in charity to a poor and oppressed people.

The next attempt was to lay the foundation of a committee in Bristol, and of a petition to Parliament from it for the abolition of the Slave-trade. I had now made many friends. A gentleman of the name of Paynter had felt himself much interested in my labours. Mr. Joseph Harford, a man of fortune, of great respectability of character, and of considerable influence, had attached himself to the cause. Dr. Fox had assisted me in it. Mr. Hughes, a clergyman of the Baptist church, was anxious and ready to serve it. Dr. Camplin, of the Establishment, with several of his friends, continued steady. Matthew Wright, James Harford, Truman Harford, and all the Quakers to a man, were strenuous, and this on the best of principles, in its support. To all these I spoke, and I had the pleasure of seeing that my wishes were likely in a short time to be gratified in both these cases.

It was now necessary that I should write to the committee in London. I had written to them only two letters, during my absence; for I had devoted myself so much to the great object I had undertaken, that I could think of little else. Hence some of my friends among them were obliged to write to different persons at Bristol, to inquire if I was alive. I gave up a day or two, therefore, to this purpose. I informed the committee of all my discoveries in the various branches to which my attention had been directed, and desired them in return to procure me various official documents for the port of London, which I then specified. Having done this, I



conferred with Mr. Falconbridge, relative to being with me at Liverpool. I thought it right to make him no other offer than that his expenses should be paid. He acceded to my request on these disinterested terms; and I took my departure from Bristol, leaving him to follow me in a few days.

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## CHAPTER X.

*Author secures the Gloucester paper, and lays the foundation of a petition from that city—does the same at Worcester—and at Chester—arrives at Liverpool—collects specimens of African produce—also imports and exports—and muster-rolls—and accounts of dock duties—His introduction to Mr. Norris, and others—Author and his errand become known—People visit him out of curiosity—Frequent controversies on the subject of the Slave-trade.*

ON my arrival at Gloucester, I waited upon my friend Dean Tucker. He was pleased to hear of the great progress I had made since he left me. On communicating to him my intention of making interest with the editors of some provincial papers, to enlighten the public mind, and with the inhabitants of some respectable places, for petitions to Parliament, relative to the abolition of the Slave-trade, he approved of it, and introduced me to Mr. Raikes, the proprietor of the respectable paper belonging to that city. Mr. Raikes acknowledged, without any hesitation, the pleasure he should have in serving such a noble cause; and he promised to grant me,

from time to time, a corner in his paper, for such things as I might point out to him for insertion. This promise he performed afterwards, without any pecuniary consideration, and solely on the ground of benevolence. He promised also his assistance as to the other object, for the promotion of which I left him several of my Summary Views to distribute.

At Worcester I trod over the same ground, and with the same success. Timothy Bevington, of the religious society of the Quakers, was the only person to whom I had an introduction there. He accompanied me to the mayor, to the editor of the Worcester paper, and to several others, before each of whom I pleaded the cause of the oppressed Africans in the best manner I was able. I dilated both on the inhumanity and on the impolicy of the trade, which I supported by the various facts recently obtained at Bristol. I desired, however, as far as petitions were concerned, (and this desire I expressed on all other similar occasions.) that no attempt should be made to obtain these, till such information had been circulated on the subject, that every one, when called upon, might judge, from his knowledge of it, how far he would feel it right to join in it. For this purpose I left also here several of my Summary Views for distribution.

After my arrival at Chester, I went to the bishop's residence, but I found he was not there. Knowing no other person in the place, I wrote a note to Mr. Cowdroy, whom I understood to be the editor of the Chester paper, soliciting an interview with him. I explained my wishes to him on both subjects. He seemed to be greatly rejoiced, when we met, that such a measure as

that of the abolition of the Slave-trade was contemplation. Living at so short a distance from Liverpool, and in a county from which many persons were constantly going to Africa he was by no means ignorant, as some were, the nature of this cruel traffic; but yet had no notion that I had probed it so deeply, that I had brought to light such important circumstances concerning it, as he found by conversation. He made me a hearty offer of services on this occasion, and this express without fee or reward. I accepted them joyfully and gratefully. It was, indeed, a most important thing, to have a station so near the enemy's camp, where we could watch their motions, and meet any attack which might be made from it. And this office of a sentinel John Cowdroy performed with great vigilance; and when he afterwards left Chester for Manchester to establish a paper there, he carried with him the same friendly disposition towards our cause.

My first introduction at Liverpool was to William Rathbone, a member of the religious society of the Quakers. He was the same person, who before the formation of our committee, had procured me copies of several of the muster-rolls of the slave-vessels belonging to that port, so that, though we were not personally known, yet we were not strangers to each other. Isaac Hadwen, a respectable member of the same society, was the person whom I saw next. He had been introduced to him, previously to my journey, when he was at London, at the yearly meeting of the Quakers, so that no letter to him was necessary. As Mr. Roscoe had generously given the profits of *The Wrongs of Africa*

our committee, I made no scruple of calling upon him. His reception of me was very friendly, and he introduced me afterwards to Dr. Currie, who had written the preface to that poem.

It may not, perhaps, be necessary to enter so largely into my proceedings at Liverpool as at Bristol. The following account, therefore, may suffice.

In my attempts to add to my collection of specimens of African produce, I was favoured with a sample of gum ruber astringens, of cotton from the Gambia, of indigo and musk, of long pepper, of black pepper from Whidah, of mahogany from Calabar, and of clothes of different colours, made by the natives, which, while they gave other proofs of the quality of their own cotton, gave proofs, also, of the variety of their dyes.

I made interest at the Custom-house for various exports and imports, and for copies of the muster-rolls of several slave-vessels, besides those of vessels employed in other trades.

By looking out constantly for information on this great subject, I was led to the examination of a printed card or table of the dock duties of Liverpool, which was published annually. The town of Liverpool had so risen in opulence and importance, from only a fishing village, that the corporation seemed to have a pride in giving a public view of this increase. Hence they published and circulated this card. Now the card contained one, among other facts, which was almost as precious, in a political point of view, as any I had yet obtained. It stated, that in the year 1772, when I knew that a hundred vessels

sailed out of Liverpool for the coast of Africa the dock-duties amounted to 4552*l.*, and in 1779, when I knew that, in consequence of the war, only eleven went from thence to the coast, they amounted to 4957*l.* From these facts, put together, two conclusions were obvious. The first was, that the opulence of Liverpool, as far as the entry of vessels into its docks and the dock duties arising from thence, concerned, was not indebted to the Slave-trade, for these duties were highest when it had only eleven ships in that employ. The second was, that there had been almost a practical experiment with respect to the abolition of it; for the number of vessels in it had been gradually reduced from one hundred to eleven, and yet the West-India trade had not complained of their ruin, nor had the merchants or manufacturers suffered, nor had Liverpool been affected by the change.

The common conversation of this place was much the same as that at Bristol on the subject of this trade. Horrible facts concerning it were in every body's mouth. But they were numerous, as was likely to be the case, for eighty vessels were employed from one port only eighteen from the other. The people at Liverpool seemed to be more hardened to these facts, they related them with more coldness and less feeling. This may be accounted for, from the greater number of those facts, as just from the mention of which, as it was of course frequent, occasioned them to lose their power of exciting surprise. All this I thought in my own mind, as I should more easily, or with less consciousness, come to the knowledge of what I had to obtain.

My friend William Rathbone, who had been looking out to supply me with intelligence, but who was desirous that I should not be imposed upon, and that I should get it from the fountain-head, introduced me to Mr. Norris for this purpose. Norris had been formerly a slave-captain, but had quitted the trade and settled as a merchant in a different line of business. He was a man of quick penetration, and of good talents, which he had cultivated to advantage, and he had a pleasing address both as to speech and manners. He received me with great politeness, and offered me all the information I desired. I was with him five or six times at his own house for this purpose. The substance of his communications on these occasions I shall now put down, and I beg the reader's particular attention to it, as he will be referred to it in other parts of this work.

With respect to the produce of Africa, Mr. Norris enumerated many articles in which a new and valuable trade might be opened, of which he gave me one, namely, the black pepper from Whidah before mentioned. This he gave me, to use his own expressions, as one argument among many others of the impolicy of the Slave-trade, which, by turning the attention of the inhabitants to the persons of one another for sale, hindered foreigners from discovering, and themselves from cultivating, many of the valuable productions of their own soil.

On the subject of procuring slaves he gave it as his decided opinion, that many of the inhabitants of Africa were kidnapped by each other, as they were travelling on the roads, or fishing in the creeks, or cultivating their little spots.

Having learnt their language, he had collected the fact from various quarters, but more particularly from the accounts of slaves, whom he had transported in his own vessels. With respect however to Whidah, many came from thence, who were reduced to slavery in a different manner. The king of Dahomey, whose life (with the wars and customs of the Dahomans) he said he was then writing, and who was a very despotic prince, made no scruple of seizing his own subjects, and of selling them, if he was in want of any of the articles which the slave-vessels would afford him. The history of this prince's life he lent me afterwards to read, while it was yet in manuscript, in which I observed that he had recorded all the facts now mentioned. Indeed he made no hesitation to state them, either when we were by ourselves, or when others were in company with us. He repeated them at one time in the presence both of Mr. Cruden, and of Coupland. The latter was then a slave-merchant at Liverpool. He seemed to be fired at the relation of these circumstances. Unable to restrain himself longer, he entered into a defence of the trade, both as to the humanity and the policy of it. But Mr. Norris took up his arguments in both these cases, and answered them in a solid manner.

With respect to the Slave-trade, as it affected the health of our seamen, Mr. Norris admitted it to be destructive. But I did not stand in need of this information, as I knew this part of the subject, in consequence of my familiarity with the muster-rolls, better than himself.

He admitted it also to be true, that they were too frequently ill treated in this trade. A day or

two after our conversation on this latter subject he brought me the manuscript journal of a voyage to Africa, which had been kept by a mate, with whom he was then acquainted. He brought it to me to read, as it might throw some light upon the subject on which we had talked last. In this manuscript various instances of cruel usage towards seamen were put down, from which it appeared that the mate, who wrote it, had not escaped himself.

At the last interview we had, he seemed to be so satisfied of the inhumanity, injustice, and impolicy of the trade, that he made me a voluntary offer of certain clauses, which he had been thinking of, and which, he believed, if put into an act of parliament, would judiciously effect its abolition. The offer of these clauses I embraced eagerly. He dictated them, and I wrote. I wrote them in a small book which I had then in my pocket. They were these :

No vessel under a heavy penalty to supply foreigners with slaves.

Every vessel to pay to government a tax for a register on clearing out to supply our own islands with slaves.

Every such vessel to be prohibited from purchasing or bringing home any of the productions of Africa.

Every such vessel to be prohibited from bringing home a passenger, or any article of produce, from the West-Indies.

A bounty to be given to every vessel trading in the natural productions of Africa. This bounty to be paid in part out of the tax arising from the registers of the slave-vessels.

Certain establishments to be made by govern-



ment in Africa, in the Bananas, in the Isles de Los, on the banks of the Camaranca, and in other places, for the encouragement and support of the new trade to be substituted there.

Such then were the services, which Mr. Norris, at the request of William Rathbone, rendered me at Liverpool, during my stay there; and I have been very particular in detailing them, because I shall be obliged to allude to them, as I have before observed, on some important occasions in a future part of the work.

On going my rounds one day, I met accidentally with captain Chaffers. This gentleman either was or had been in the West-India employ. His heart had beaten in sympathy with mine, and he had greatly favoured our cause. He had seen me at Mr. Norris', and learned my errand there. He told me he could introduce me in a few minutes, as we were then near at hand, to captain Lace, if I chose it. Captain Lace, he said, had been long in the Slave-trade, and could give me very accurate information about it. I accepted his offer. On talking to captain Lace, relative to the productions of Africa, he told me that mahogany grew at Calabar. He began to describe a tree of that kind, which he had seen there. This tree was from about eighteen inches to two feet in diameter, and about sixty feet high, or, as he expressed it, of the height of a tall chimney. As soon as he mentioned Calabar, a kind of horror came over me. His name became directly associated in my mind with the place. It almost instantly occurred to me, that he commanded the Edgar out of Liverpool, when the dreadful massacre there, as has been related, took place. Indeed I

seemed to be so confident of it, that, attending more to my feelings than to my reason at this moment, I accused him with being concerned in it. This produced great confusion among us. For he looked incensed at captain Chaffers, as if he had introduced me to him for this purpose. Captain Chaffers, again, seemed to be all astonishment that I should have known of this circumstance, and to be vexed that I should have mentioned it in such a manner. I was also in a state of trembling myself. Captain Lace could only say it was a bad business. But he never defended himself, nor those concerned in it. And we soon parted, to the great joy of us all.

Soon after this interview I began to perceive that I was known in Liverpool, as well as the object for which I came. Mr. Coupland, the slave-merchant, with whom I had disputed at Mr. Norris' house, had given the alarm to those who were concerned in the trade, and captain Lace, as may be now easily imagined, had spread it. This knowledge of me and of my errand was almost immediately productive of two effects, the first of which I shall now mention.

I had a private room at the King's Arms tavern, besides my bedroom, where I used to meditate and to write. But I generally dined in public. The company at dinner had hitherto varied but little as to number, and consisted of those, both from the town and country, who had been accustomed to keep up a connexion with the house. But now things were altered, and many people came to dine there daily with a view of seeing me, as if I had been some curious creature imported from foreign parts. They thought, also, they could thus have an opportunity of con-

versing with me. Slave-merchants and slave-captains came in among others for this purpose. I had observed this difference in the number of our company for two or three days. Dale, the master of the tavern, had observed it also, and told me in a good-natured manner, that many of these were my visitors, and that I was likely to bring him a great deal of custom. In a little time, however, things became serious; for they, who came to see me, always started the abolition of the Slave-trade as the subject for conversation. Many entered into the justification of this trade with great warmth, as if to ruffle my temper, or at any rate to provoke me to talk. Others threw out, with the same view, that men were going about to abolish it, who would have done much better if they had staid at home. Others said they had heard of a person turned mad, who had conceived the thought of destroying Liverpool, and all its glory. Some gave as a toast, success to the Trade, and then laughed immoderately, and watched me when I took my glass to see if I would drink it. I saw the way in which things were now going, and I believed it would be proper that I should come to some fixed resolutions; such as, whether I should change my lodgings, and whether I should dine in private; and if not, what line of conduct it would become me to pursue on such occasions. With respect to changing my lodgings and dining in private, I conceived, if I were to do either of these things, that I should be showing an unmanly fear of my visitors, which they would turn to their own advantage. I conceived too, that, if I chose to go on as before, and to enter into conversation with them on the subject of the

abolition of the Slave-trade, I might be able, by having such an assemblage of persons daily, to gather all the arguments which they could collect on the other side of our question, an advantage which I should one day feel in the future management of the cause. With respect to the line, which I should pursue in the case of remaining in the place of my abode and in my former habits, I determined never to start the subject of the abolition myself; never to abandon it when started; never to defend it but in a serious and dignified manner; and never to discover any signs of irritation, whatever provocation might be given me. By this determination I abided rigidly. The King's Arms became now daily the place for discussion on this subject. Many tried to insult me, but to no purpose. In all these discussions I found the great advantage of having brought Mr. Falconbridge with me from Bristol: for he was always at the table; and when my opponents, with a disdainful look, tried to ridicule my knowledge, among those present, by asking me if I had ever been on the coast of Africa myself, he used generally to reply, "But I have. I know all your proceedings there, and that his statements are true." These and other words put in by him, who was an athletic and resolute-looking man, were of great service to me. All disinterested persons, of whom there were four or five daily in the room, were uniformly convinced by our arguments, and took our part, and some of them very warmly. Day after day we beat our opponents out of the field, as many of the company acknowledged, to their no small mortification, in their presence. Thus while we served the cause by discovering

all that could be said against it, we served it by giving numerous individuals proper ideas concerning it and of interesting them in our favour.

The second effect which I experienced was, that from this time I could never get any one to come forward as an evidence to serve the cause. There were, I believe, hundreds of persons in Liverpool, and in the neighbourhood of it, who had been concerned in this traffic, and who had left it, all of whom could have given such testimony concerning it as would have insured its abolition. But none of them would now speak out. Of these indeed there were some, who were alive to the horrors of it, and who lamented that it should still continue. But yet even these were backward in supporting me. All that they did was just privately to see me, to tell me that I was right, and to exhort me to persevere: but as to coming forward to be examined publicly; my object was so unpopular, and would become so much more so when brought into parliament, that they would have their houses pulled down, if they should then appear as public instruments in the annihilation of the trade. With this account I was obliged to rest satisfied; nor could I deny, when I considered the spirit, which had manifested itself, and the extraordinary number of interested persons in the place, that they had some reason for their fears: and that these fears were not groundless, appeared afterwards; for Dr. Binns, a respectable physician belonging to the religious society of the Quakers, and to whom Isaac Hadwen had introduced me, was near falling into a mischievous plot, which had been laid against him, because he was one of the subscribers to the Institution for the Aboli-

tion of the Slave-trade, and because he was suspected of having aided me in promoting that object.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Hostile disposition towards the author increases, on account of his known patronage of the seamen employed in the Slave-trade—manner of procuring and paying them at Liverpool—their treatment, and mortality—Account of the murder of Peter Green—trouble taken by the author to trace it—his narrow escape—goes to Lancaster—but returns to Liverpool—leaves the latter place.*

It has appeared that a number of persons used to come and see me, out of curiosity, at the King's Arms tavern; and that these manifested a bad disposition towards me, which was near breaking out into open insult. Now the cause of all this was, as I have observed, the knowledge which people had obtained, relative to my errand at this place. But this hostile disposition was increased by another circumstance, which I am now to mention. I had been so shocked at the treatment of the seamen belonging to the slave-vessels at Bristol, that I determined, on my arrival at Liverpool, to institute an inquiry concerning it there also. I had made considerable progress in it, so that few seamen were landed from such vessels, but I had some communication with them; and though no one else would come near me, to give me any information about the trade, these were always forward to

speaking to me, and to tell me their grievances, if it were only with the hope of being able to get redress. The consequence of this was, that they used to come to the King's Arms tavern to see me. Hence one, two, and three were almost daily to be found about the door; and this happened quite as frequently after the hostility just mentioned had shown itself, as before. They, therefore, who came to visit me out of curiosity, could not help seeing my sailor visitors; and on inquiring into their errand, they became more than ever incensed against me.

The first result of this increased hostility towards me was an application from some of them to the master of the tavern, that he would not harbour me. This he communicated to me in a friendly manner, but he was by no means desirous that I should leave him. On the other hand, he hoped I would stay long enough to accomplish my object. I thought it right, however, to take the matter into consideration; and, having canvassed it, I resolved to remain with him, for the reasons mentioned in the former chapter. But, that I might avoid doing any thing that would be injurious to his interest, as well as in some measure avoid giving unnecessary offence to others, I took lodgings in Williamson Square, where I retired to write, and occasionally to sleep, and to which place all seamen, desirous of seeing me, were referred. Hence I continued to get the same information as before, but in a less obnoxious and injurious manner.

The history of the seamen employed in the slave-vessels belonging to the port of Liverpool, I found to be similar to that of those from Bristol.

They, who went into this trade, were of two classes. The first consisted of those who were ignorant of it, and to whom, generally, improper representations of advantage had been made, for the purpose of enticing them into it. The second consisted of those, who, by means of a regular system, kept up by the mates and captains, had been purposely brought by their landlords into distress, from which they could only be extricated by going into this hateful employ. How many have I seen, with tears in their eyes, put into boats, and conveyed to vessels, which were then lying at the Black Rock, and which were only waiting to receive them to sail away!

The manner of paying them in the currency of the Islands was the same as at Bristol. But this practice was not concealed at Liverpool, as it was at the former place. The articles of agreement were printed, so that all, who chose to buy, might read them. At the same time it must be observed, that seamen were never paid in this manner in any other employ; and that the African wages, though nominally higher for the sake of procuring hands, were thus made to be actually lower than in other trades.

The loss by death was so similar, that it did not signify whether the calculation on a given number was made either at this or the other port. I had, however, a better opportunity at this, than I had at the other, of knowing the loss as it related to those, whose constitutions had been ruined, or who had been rendered incapable, by disease, of continuing their occupation at sea. For the slave-vessels, which returned to Liverpool, sailed immediately into the docks, so that I saw at once their sickly and ulcerated crews.



The number of vessels, too, was so much greater from this, than from any other port, that their sick made a more conspicuous figure in the infirmary. And they were seen also more frequently in the streets.

With respect to their treatment, nothing could be worse. It seemed to me to be but one barbarous system from the beginning to the end. I do not say barbarous, as if premeditated, but it became so in consequence of the savage habit gradually formed by a familiarity with miserable sights, and with a course of action inseparable from the trade. Men in their first voyages usually disliked the traffic; and, if they were happy enough then to abandon it, they usually escaped the disease of a hardened heart. But if they went a second and a third time, their disposition became gradually changed. It was impossible for them to be accustomed to carry away men and women by force, to keep them in chains, to see their tears, to hear their mournful lamentations, to behold the dead and the dying, to be obliged to keep up a system of severity amidst all this affliction; in short, it was impossible for them to be witnesses, and this for successive voyages, to the complicated mass of misery passing in a slave ship, without losing their fine feelings, or without contracting those habits of moroseness and cruelty, which would brutalize their nature. Now, if we consider that persons could not easily become captains (and to these the barbarities were generally chargeable by actual perpetration, or by consent) till they had been two or three voyages in this employ, we shall see the reason why it would be almost a miracle, if they, who were thus employed in it

were not rather to become monsters, than to continue to be men.

While I was at Bristol, I heard from an officer of the *Alfred*, who gave me the intelligence privately, that the steward of a Liverpool ship, whose name was Green, had been murdered in that ship. The *Alfred* was in Bonny river at the same time, and his own captain (so infamous for his cruelty, as has been before shown) was on board when it happened. The circumstances, he said, belonging to this murder, were, if report were true, of a most atrocious nature, and deserved to be made the subject of inquiry. As to the murder itself, he observed, it had passed as a notorious and uncontradicted fact.

This account was given me just as I had made an acquaintance with Mr. Falconbridge, and I informed him of it. He said he had no doubt of its truth. For in his last voyage he went to Bonny himself, where the ship was then lying, in which the transaction happened. The king and several of the black traders told him of it. The report then current was simply this, that the steward had been barbarously beaten one evening; that after this he was let down with chains upon him into a boat, which was along side of the ship, and that the next morning he was found dead.

On my arrival at Liverpool, I resolved to inquire into the truth of this report. On looking into one of the wet docks, I saw the name of the vessel alluded to. I walked over the decks of several others, and got on board her. Two people were walking up and down her, and one was leaning upon a rail by the side. I asked the latter how many slaves this ship had carried in

her last voyage. He replied, he could not tell; but one of the two persons walking about could answer me, as he had sailed out and returned in her. This man came up to us, and joined in conversation. He answered my question and many others, and would have shown me the ship. But on asking him how many seamen had died on the voyage, he changed his manner, and said, with apparent hesitation, he could not tell. I asked him next, what had become of the steward Green. He said, he believed he was dead. I asked how the seamen had been used. He said, not worse than others. I then asked whether Green had been used worse than others. He replied, he did not then recollect. I found that he was now quite upon his guard, and as I could get no satisfactory answer from him I left the ship.

On the next day, I looked over the muster-roll of this vessel. On examining it, I found that sixteen of the crew had died. I found also the name of Peter Green. I found, again, that the latter had been put down among the dead. I observed also, that the ship had left Liverpool on the fifth of June 1786, and had returned on the fifth of June 1787, and that Peter Green was put down as having died on the nineteenth of September; from all which circumstances it was evident that he must, as my Bristol information asserted, have died upon the coast.

Notwithstanding this extraordinary coincidence of name, mortality, time, and place, I could gain no further intelligence about the affair till within about ten days before I left Liverpool; when among the seamen, who came to apply to me in Williamson Square, was George Ormond.

He came to inform me of his own ill usage ; from which circumstance I found that he had sailed in the same ship with Peter Green. This led me to inquire into the transaction in question, and I received from him the following account :

Peter Green had been shipped as steward. A black woman of the name of Rodney, went out in the same vessel. She belonged to the owners of it, and was to be an interpretest to the slaves who should be purchased. About five in the evening, some time in the month of September, the vessel then lying in Bonny river, the captain, as was his custom, went on shore. In his absence, Rodney, the black woman, asked Green for the keys of the pantry ; which he refused her, alleging that the captain had already beaten him for having given them to her on a former occasion, when she drank the wine. The woman being passionate, struck him, and a scuffle ensued, out of which Green extricated himself as well as he could.

When the scuffle was over the woman retired to the cabin, and appeared pensive. Between eight and nine in the evening, the captain, who was attended by the captain of the Alfred, came on board. Rodney immediately ran to him, and informed him that Green had made an assault upon her. The captain, without any inquiry, beat him severely, and ordered his hands to be made fast to some bolts on the starboard side of the ship and under the half deck, and then flogged him himself, using the lashes of the cat-of-nine-tails upon his back at one time, and the double walled knot at the end of it upon his head at another ; and stopping to rest at inter-

vals, and using each hand alternately, that he might strike with the greater severity.

The pain had now become so very severe, that Green cried out, and entreated the captain of the Alfred, who was standing by, to pity his hard case, and to intercede for him. But the latter replied, that he would have served him in the same manner. Unable to find a friend here, he called upon the chief mate; but this only made matters worse, for the captain then ordered the latter to flog him also; which he did for some time using however only the lashes of the instrument. Green then called, in his distress, upon the second mate to speak for him; but the second mate was immediately ordered to perform the same cruel office, and was made to persevere in it till the lashes were all worn into threads. But the barbarity did not close here: for the captain, on seeing the instrument now become useless, ordered another, with which he flogged him as before, beating him at times over the head with the double walled knot, and changing his hands, and cursing his own left hand for not being able to strike so severe a blow as his right.

The punishment, as inflicted by all parties, had now lasted two hours and a half, when George Ormond was ordered to cut down one of the arms, and the boatswain the other, from the places of their confinement. This being done, Green lay motionless on the deck. He attempted to utter something. Ormond understood it to be the word water. But no water was allowed him. The captain, on the other hand, said he had not yet done with him, and ordered him to be confined with his arms across, his right hand to his left foot, and his left hand to his right

foot. For this purpose the carpenter brought shackles, and George Ormond was compelled to put them on. The captain then ordered some tackle to be made fast to the limbs of the said Peter Green, in which situation he was then hoisted up, and afterwards let down into a boat, which was lying alongside the ship. Michael Cunningham was then sent to loose the tackle, and to leave him there.

In the middle watch, or between one and two next morning, George Ormond looked out of one of the portholes, and called to Green, but received no answer. Between two and three, Paul Berry, a seaman, was sent down into the boat and found him dead. He made his report to one of the officers of the ship. About five in the morning, the body was brought up, and laid on the waist near the half deck door. The captain on seeing the body, when he rose, expressed no concern, but ordered it to be knocked out of irons, and to be buried at the usual place of interment for seamen, on Bonny Point. I may now observe, that the deceased was in good health before the punishment took place, and in high spirits; for he played upon the flute only a short time before Rodney asked him for the keys, while these seamen, who were in health, danced.

On hearing this cruel relation from George Ormond, who was throughout a material witness to the scene, I had no doubt in my own mind of the truth of it. But I thought it right to tell him at once that I had seen a person, about four weeks ago, who had been the same voyage with him and Peter Green, but yet who had no recollection of these circumstances. Upon this he

looked quite astonished, and began to grow angry. He maintained he had seen the whole. He had also held the candle himself during the whole punishment. He asserted that one candle and half of another were burnt out while it lasted. He said also, that, while the body lay in the waist, he had handled the abused parts, and had put three of his fingers into a hole, made by the double walled knot, in the head, from whence a quantity of blood, and, he believed, brains issued. He then challenged me to bring the man before him. I desired him upon this to be cool, and to come to me the next day, and I would then talk with him again upon the subject.

In the interim I consulted the muster-roll of the vessel again. I found the name of George Ormond. He had sailed in her out of Liverpool, and had been discharged at the latter end of January in the West-Indies, as he had told me. I found also the names of Michael Cunningham and of Paul Berry, whom he had mentioned. It was obvious also that Ormond's account of the captain of the Alfred being on board at the time of the punishment, tallied with that given me at Bristol by an officer of that vessel, and that his account of letting down Peter Green into the boat tallied with that, which Mr. Falconbridge, as I mentioned before, had heard from the king and the black traders in Bonny river.

When he came to me next day, he came in high spirits. He said he had found out the man whom I had seen. The man, however, when he talked to him about the murder of Peter Green, acknowledged every thing concerning it. Ormond intimated that this man was to sail again

he same ship under the promise of being an-  
 ser, and that he had been kept on board, and  
 been enticed to a second voyage, for no  
 er purpose than that he might be prevented  
 n divulging the matter. I then asked Or-  
 id, whether he thought the man would ac-  
 owledge the murder in my hearing. He re-  
 d, that if I were present, he thought he  
 ild not say much about it, as he was soon to  
 under the same captain, but that he would  
 deny it. If however I were out of sight,  
 ugh I might be in hearing, he believed he  
 ild acknowledge the facts.

By the assistance of Mr. Falconbridge, I found  
 ublic house, which had two rooms in it.  
 arly at the top of the partition between them  
 s a small window, which a person might look  
 ough by standing upon a chair. I desired  
 mond, one evening, to invite the man into the  
 ger room, in which he was to have a candle,  
 I to talk with him on the subject. I purposed  
 station myself in the smallest in the dark, so  
 t by looking through the window I could both  
 and hear him, and yet be unperceived myself.  
 e room, in which I was to be, was one, where  
 ead were frequently carried to be owned.  
 e were all in our places at the time appointed.  
 irectly discovered that it was the same man  
 h whom I had conversed on board the ship in  
 e wet docks.

I heard him distinctly relate many of the par-  
 ulars of the murder, and acknowledge them  
 . Ormond, after having talked with him some  
 e, said, "Well, then, you believe Peter Green  
 s'actually murdered?" He replied, "If Peter  
 een was not murdered, no man ever was."



What followed I do not know. I had quite enough; and the room was so disagreeable in smell, that I did not choose to stay in it than was absolutely necessary.

I own I was now quite satisfied that the der had taken place, and my first thought bring the matter before the mayor. and to up three of the officers of the ship. By mentioning my intention to my friends, dissuaded from it. They had no doubt but in Liverpool, as there was now a notion that Slave-trade would become a subject of elementary inquiry, every effort would be made to overthrow me. They were of opinion also such of the magistrates, as were interested in the trade, when applied to for warrants of apprehension, would contrive to give notice to officers to escape. In addition to this I believed, that so many in the town were so incensed against me, that I should be torn to pieces, and the house where I lodged pulled down, if I were to make the attempt. I thought it right therefore to do nothing for the present but I sent Ormond to London, to keep him out of the way of corruption, till I should make up my mind as to further proceedings on the subject.

It is impossible, if I observe the bounds prescribed myself, and I believe the reader will be glad of it on account of his own feeling. I should lay open the numerous cases, that came before me at Liverpool, relative to the treatment of the seamen in this wicked trade. It may be sufficient to say, that they had ruined my constitution, and affected my spirits. They were in my thoughts on my pillow as I retired to rest, and I found them before me

when I awoke. Afflicting however as they were they were of great use in the promotion of our cause. For they served, whatever else failed, as a stimulus to perpetual energy. They made me think light of former labours, and they urged me imperiously to new. And here I may observe, that among the many circumstances, which ought to excite our joy on considering the great event of the abolition of the Slave-trade, which has now happily taken place, there are few for which we ought to be more grateful, than that from this time our commerce ceases to breed such abandoned wretches; while those, who have thus been bred in it, and who may yet find employment in other trades, will in the common course of nature be taken off in a given time, so that our marine will at length be purified from a race of monsters, which have helped to cripple its strength, and to disgrace its character.

The temper of many of the interested people of Liverpool had now become still more irritable, and their hostility more apparent than before. I received anonymous letters, entreating me to leave it, or I should otherwise never leave it alive. The only effect, which this advice had upon me, was to make me more vigilant when I went out at night. I never stirred out at this time without Mr. Falconbridge. And he never accompanied me without being well armed. Of this, however, I knew nothing until we had left the place. There was certainly a time, when I had reason to believe that I had a narrow escape. I was one day on the pier-head with many others looking at some little boats below at the time of a heavy gale. Several persons, probably out of curiosity, were hastening thither. I had seen all

I intended to see, and was departing, when I noticed eight or nine persons making towards me. I was then only about eight or nine yards from the precipice of the pier, but going from it. I expected that they would have divided to let me through them; instead of which they closed upon me, and bore me back. I was borne within a yard of the precipice, when I discovered my danger; and perceiving among them the murderer of Peter Green, and two others who had insulted me at the King's Arms, it instantly struck me that they had a design to throw me over the pier-head; which they might have done at this time, and yet have pleaded that I had been killed by accident. There was not a moment to lose. Vigorous, on account of the danger, I darted forward. One of them, against whom I pushed myself, fell down. Their ranks were broken. And I escaped, not without blows, amidst their imprecations and abuse.

I determined now to go to Lancaster, to make some inquiries about the Slave-trade there. I had a letter of introduction to William Jepson, one of the religious society of the Quakers, for this purpose. I found from him, that, though there were slave merchants at Lancaster, they made their outfits at Liverpool, as a more convenient port. I learnt too from others, that the captain of the last vessel, which had sailed out of Lancaster to the coast of Africa for slaves, had taken off so many of the natives treacherously, that any other vessel known to come from it would be cut off. There were only now one or two superannuated captains living in the place. Finding I could get no oral testimony, I was in-

troducted into the Custom-house. Here I just looked over the muster-rolls of such slave-vessels as had formerly sailed from this port ; and having found that the loss of seamen was precisely in the same proportion as elsewhere, I gave myself no further trouble, but left the place.

On my return to Liverpool, I was informed by Mr. Falconbridge, that a shipmate of Ormond, of the name of Patrick Murray, who had been discharged in the West-Indies, had arrived there.

This man, he said, had been to call upon me in my absence, to seek redress for his own bad usage ; but in the course of conversation he had confirmed all the particulars as stated by Ormond, relative to the murder of Peter Green. On consulting the muster-roll of the ship, I found his name, and that he had been discharged in the West-Indies on the second of February. I determined therefore to see him. I cross-examined him in the best manner I could. I could neither make him contradict himself, nor say any thing that militated against the testimony of Ormond. I was convinced therefore of the truth of the transaction ; and, having obtained his consent, I sent him to London to stay with the latter, till he should hear further from me. I learnt also from Mr. Falconbridge, that my visitors had continued to come to the King's Arms during my absence ; that they had been very liberal of their abuse of me ; and that one of them did not hesitate to say (which is remarkable) that "I deserved to be thrown over the pier-head."

Finding now that I could get no further evidence ; that the information which I had already

obtained was considerable ;\* and that the committee had expressed an earnest desire, in a letter which I had received, that I would take into consideration the propriety of writing my Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave-trade as soon as possible, I determined upon leaving Liverpool. I went round accordingly and took leave of my friends. The last of these was William Rathbone, and I have to regret, that it was also the last time I ever saw him. Independently of the gratitude I owed him for assisting me in this great cause, I respected him highly as a man. He possessed a fine understanding with a solid judgment. He was a person of extraordinary simplicity of manners. Though he lived in a state of pecuniary independence, he gave an example of great temperance, as well as of great humility of mind. But however humble he appeared, he had always the courage to dare to do that which was right, however it might resist the customs or the prejudices of men. In his own line of trade, which was that of a timber-merchant on an extensive scale, he would not allow any article to be sold for the use of a slave-ship, and he always refused those, who applied to him for materials for such purposes. But it is evident that it was his intention, if he had lived, to bear his testimony still more publicly upon this subject ; for an advertisement, stating the ground of his refusal to furnish any thing for this traffic upon Christian principles, with a memorandum for two advertisements in the Liverpool papers, was found among his papers at his decease.

\* In London, Bristol and Liverpool, I had already obtained the names of more than 20,000 seamen, in different voyages, knowing what had become of each.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Author proceeds to Manchester—finds a spirit rising among the people there for the abolition of the Slave-trade—is requested to deliver a discourse on the subject of the Slave-trade—heads of it—and extracts—proceeds to Keddleston—and Birmingham—finds a similar spirit at the latter place—revisits Bristol—new and difficult situation there—Author crosses the Severn at night—unsuccessful termination of his journey—returns to London.*

I now took my departure from Liverpool, and proceeded to Manchester, where I arrived on the Friday evening. On the Saturday morning Mr. Thomas Walker, attended by Mr. Cooper and Mr. Bayley of Hope, called upon me. They were then strangers to me. They came, they said, having heard of my arrival, to congratulate me on the spirit which was then beginning to show itself, among the people of Manchester and of other places, on the subject of the Slave-trade, and which would unquestionably manifest itself further by breaking out into petitions to parliament for its abolition. I was much surprised at this information. I had devoted myself so entirely to my object, that I had never had time to read a newspaper since I left London. I never knew therefore, till now, that the attention of the public had been drawn to the subject in such a manner. And as to petitions, though I myself had suggested the idea at Bridgewater, Bristol, Gloucester, and two or three other places. I had only done it provisionally, and this without either

the knowledge or the consent of the committee. The news, however, as it astonished, so it almost overpowered me with joy. I rejoiced in it because it was a proof of the general good disposition of my countrymen; because it showed me that the cause was such as needed only to be known, to be patronized; and because the manifestation of this spirit seemed to me to be an earnest, that success would ultimately follow.

The gentlemen now mentioned took me away with them, and introduced me to Mr. Thomas Phillips. We conversed at first upon the discoveries made in my journey; but in a little time understanding that I had been educated as a clergyman, they came upon me with one voice as if it had been before agreed upon, to deliver a discourse the next day, which was Sunday, on the subject of the Slave-trade. I was always aware that it was my duty to do all that I could with propriety to serve the cause I had undertaken, and yet I found myself embarrassed at their request. Foreseeing, as I have before related, that this cause might demand my attention to it for the greatest part of my life, I had given up all thoughts of my profession. I had hitherto but seldom exercised it, and then only to oblige some friend. I doubted too, at the first view of the thing, whether the pulpit ought to be made an engine for political purposes, though I could not but consider the Slave-trade as a mass of crimes, and therefore the effort to get rid of it as a Christian duty. I had an idea too, that sacred matters should not be entered upon without due consideration, nor prosecuted in a hasty but in decorous and solemn manner. I saw besides that as it was then two o'clock in the afternoon

and this sermon was to be forthcoming the next day, there was not sufficient time to compose it properly. All these difficulties I suggested to my new friends without any reserve. But nothing that I could urge would satisfy them. They would not hear of a refusal, and I was obliged to give my consent, though I was not reconciled to the measure.

When I went into the church it was so full that I could scarcely get to my place; for notice had been publicly given, though I knew nothing of it, that such a discourse would be delivered. I was surprised also to find a great crowd of black people standing round the pulpit. There might be forty or fifty of them. The text that I took, as the best to be found in such a hurry, was the following: "Thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

I took an opportunity of showing from these words, that Moses, in endeavouring to promote among the children of Israel a tender disposition towards those unfortunate strangers who had come under their dominion, reminded them of their own state when strangers in Egypt, as one of the most forcible arguments which could be used on such an occasion. For they could not have forgotten that the Egyptians "had made them serve with rigour; that they had made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; and that all the service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour." The argument therefore of Moses was simply this; "Ye knew well, when ye were strangers in Egypt, the nature of your own feelings. Were you not



made miserable by your debased situation there. But if so, you must be sensible that the stranger who has the same heart, or the same feeling with yourselves, must experience similar suffering, if treated in a similar manner. I charge you then, knowing this, to stand clear of the crime of his oppression."

The law, then, by which Moses commanded the children of Israel to regulate their conduct with respect to the usage of the stranger I showed to be a law of universal and eternal obligation, and for this, among other reasons, that was neither more nor less than the Christian law, which appeared afterwards, that we should not do that to others, which we should be unwilling to have done unto ourselves.

Having gone into these statements at some length, I made an application of them in the following words:

This being the case, and this law of Moses being afterwards established into a fundamental precept of Christianity, I must apply it to facts of the present day, and I am sorry that I must apply it to...ourselves.

"And first, are there no strangers, whom we oppress? I fear the wretched African will say that he drinks the cup of sorrow, and that he drinks it at our hands. Torn from his native soil, and from his family and friends, he is immediately forced into a situation, of all others the most degrading, where he and his progeny are considered as cattle, as possessions, and as the possessions of a man to whom he never gave offence.

"It is a melancholy fact, but it can be abundantly proved, that great numbers of the unfor-

fortunate strangers, who are carried from Africa to our colonies, are fraudulently and forcibly taken from their native soil. To descant but upon a single instance of the kind must be productive of pain to the ear of sensibility and freedom. Consider the sensations of the person, who is thus carried off by the ruffians, who have been lurking to intercept him. Separated from every thing which he esteems in life, without the possibility even of bidding his friends adieu, behold him overwhelmed in tears; wringing his hands in despair; looking backwards upon the spot where all his hopes and wishes lay, while his family at home are waiting for him with anxiety and suspense; are waiting, perhaps, for sustenance; are agitated between hope and fear; till length of absence confirms the latter, and they are immediately plunged into inconceivable misery and distress.

“ If this instance, then, is sufficiently melancholy of itself, and is at all an act of oppression, how complicated will our guilt appear, who are the means of snatching away thousands annually in the same manner, and who force them and their families into the same unhappy situation, without either remorse or shame !”

Having proceeded to show, in a more particular manner than I can detail here, how, by means of the Slave-trade, we oppressed the stranger I made an inquiry into the other branch of the subject, or how far we had a knowledge of his heart.

To elucidate this point, I mentioned several specific instances, out of those which I had collected in my journey, and which I could depend upon as authentic, of honour; gratitude; fidelity;

ty ; filial, fraternal, and conjugal affection ; and of the finest sensibility, on the part of those, who had been brought into our colonies from Africa, in the character of slaves, and then I proceeded for a while in the following words :

“ If, then, we oppress the stranger, as I have shown, and if, by a knowledge of his heart, we find that he is a person of the same passions and feelings as ourselves, we are certainly breaking, by means of the prosecution of the Slave-trade, that fundamental principle of Christianity, which says, that we shall not do that unto another, which we wish should not be done unto ourselves ; and, I fear, cutting ourselves off from all expectation of the Divine Blessing. For how inconsistent is our conduct ! We come into the temple of God ; we fall prostrate before him ; we pray to him. that he will have mercy upon us. But how shall he have mercy upon us, who have had no mercy upon others ! We pray to him, again, that he will deliver us from evil. But how shall he deliver us from evil, who are daily invading the rights of the injured African, and heaping misery on his head ! ”

I attempted, lastly, to show, that, though the sin of the Slave-trade had been hitherto a sin of ignorance, and might therefore have so far been winked at, yet as the crimes and miseries belonging to it became known, it would attach even to those who had no concern in it, if they suffered it to continue either without notice or reproach, or if they did not exert themselves in a reasonable manner for its suppression. I noticed, particularly, the case of Tyre and Sidon, which were the Bristol and the Liverpool of those times. A direct judgment had been pronounced

by the prophet Joel against these cities, and, what is remarkable, for the prosecution of this same barbarous traffic. Thus, "And what have ye to do with me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? Ye have cast lots for my people. Ye have sold a girl for wine. The children of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem, have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their own border. Behold! I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will recompense your wickedness on your own heads." Such was the language of the prophet; and Tyre and Sidon fell, as he had pointed out, when the inhabitants were either cut off, or carried into slavery.

Having thrown out these ideas to the notice of the audience, I concluded in the following words:

"If, then, we wish to avert the heavy national judgement which is hanging over our heads, (for must we not believe that our crimes towards the innocent Africans lie recorded against us in heaven,) let us endeavour to assert their cause. Let us nobly withstand the torrent of the evil, however inveterately it may be fixed among the customs of the times; not, however, using our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness against those, who perhaps without due consideration have the misfortune to be concerned in it, but upon proper motives, and in a proper spirit, as the servants of God; so that if the sun should be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, and the very heaven should fall upon us, we may fall in the general convulsion without dismay, conscious that we have done our duty in endeavouring to

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the prophet Joel against these cities, and, is remarkable, for the prosecution of this barbarous traffic. Thus, "And what have ye do with me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the cities of Palestine? Ye have cast lots for my people. Ye have sold a girl for wine. The men of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem, have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their own border. Alas! I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will recompense your wickedness on your own heads." Such is the language of the prophet; and Tyre and Sidon fell, as he had pointed out, when the Britons were either cut off, or carried into slavery.

Having thrown out these ideas to the notice of the audience, I concluded in the following manner:

"If, then, we wish to avert the heavy national judgment which is hanging over our heads, (for we do not believe that our crimes towards the present Africans lie recorded against us in heaven,) let us endeavour to assert their cause. We nobly withstand the torrent of the evil, but never inveterately it may be fixed among the customs of the times; not, however, using our religion as a cloak of maliciousness against these, who perhaps without due consideration have the misfortune to be concerned in it, but upon proper principles, and in a proper spirit, as the servants of God; so that if the ~~black~~ <sup>black</sup> ~~slave~~ <sup>slave</sup> turned into

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succour the distressed, and that the stain of the blood of Africa is not upon us."

From Manchester I proceeded to Keddleston in Derbyshire, to spend a day with Lord Scarsdale, and to show him my little collection of African productions, and to inform him of my progress since I last saw him. Here a letter was forwarded to me from the Reverend John Too-good, of Keinton Magna in Dorsetshire, though I was then unknown to him. He informed me that he had addressed several letters to the inhabitants of his own county, through their provincial paper, on the subject of the Slave-trade, which letters had produced a considerable effect. It appeared, however, that, when he began them, he did not know of the formation of our committee, or that he had a single coadjutor in the cause.

From Keddleston I turned off to Birmingham, being desirous of visiting Bristol in my way to London, to see if any thing new had occurred since I was there. I was introduced by letter, at Birmingham, to Sampson and Charles Lloyd, the brothers of John Lloyd, belonging to our committee, and members of the religious society of the Quakers. I was highly gratified in finding that these, in conjunction with Mr. Russell, had been attempting to awaken the attention of the inhabitants to this great subject, and that in consequence of their laudable efforts, a spirit was beginning to show itself there, as at Manchester, in favour of the abolition of the Slave-trade. The kind manner in which these received me, and the deep interest which they appeared to take in our cause, led me to an esteem

for them, which, by means of subsequent visits, grew into a solid friendship.

At length I arrived at Bristol at about ten o'clock on Friday morning. But what was my surprise, when almost the first thing I heard from my friend Harry Gandy was, that a letter had been dispatched to me to Liverpool, nearly a week ago, requesting me immediately to repair to this place; for that in consequence of notice from the Lords of the Admiralty, advertised in the public papers, the trial of the chief mate, whom I had occasioned to be taken up at Bristol, for the murder of William Lines, was coming on at the Old Bailey, and that not an evidence was to be found. This intelligence almost paralysed me. I cannot describe my feelings on receiving it. I reproached myself with my own obstinacy for having resisted the advice of Mr. Burges, as has been before explained. All his words now came fresh into my mind. I was terrified, too, with the apprehension that my own reputation was now at stake. I foresaw all the calumnies which would be spread, if the evidences were not forthcoming on this occasion. I anticipated, also, the injury which the cause itself might sustain, if, at our outset, as it were, I should not be able to substantiate what I had publicly advanced; and yet the mayor of Bristol had heard and determined the case; he had not only examined, but reexamined, the evidences; he had not only committed, but recommitted, the accused: this was the only consolation I had. I was sensible, however, amidst all these workings of my mind, that not a moment was to be lost, and I began, therefore, to set on foot an inquiry as to the absent persons.

On waiting upon the mother of Willian Lines, I learnt from her, that two out of four of the witnesses had been bribed by the slave-merchants, and sent to sea, that they might not be forthcoming at the time of the trial; that the two others had been tempted also, but that they had been enabled to resist the temptation; that, desirous of giving their testimony in this cause, they had gone into some coal-mine between Neath and Swansea, where they might support themselves till they should be called for; and that she had addressed a letter to them, at the request of Mr. Gandy, above a week ago, in which she had desired them to come to Bristol immediately, but that she had received no answer from them. She then concluded, either that her letter had miscarried, or that they had left the place.

I determined to lose no time, after the receipt of this intelligence; and I prevailed upon a young man, whom my friend Harry Gandy had recommended to me, to set off directly, and to go in search of them. He was to travel all night, and to bring them, or, if weary himself with his journey, to send them up, without ever sleeping on the road. It was now between twelve and one in the afternoon. I saw him depart. In the interim I went to Thompson's, and other places, to inquire if any other of the seamen, belonging to the Thomas, were to be found: but, though I hunted diligently till four o'clock, I could learn nothing satisfactory. I then went to dinner, but I grew uneasy. I was fearful that my messenger might be at a loss, or that he might want assistance on some occasion or other. I now judged that it would have been more prudent if two persons had been sent, who might

have conferred with each other, and who might have divided, when they had reached Neath, and gone to different mines, to inquire for the witnesses. These thoughts disturbed me. Those, also, which had occurred when I first heard of the vexatious way in which things were situated, renewed themselves painfully to my mind. My own obstinacy in resisting the advice of Mr. Burges, and the fear of injury to my own reputation, and to that of the cause I had undertaken, were again before my eyes. I became still more uneasy; and I had no way of relieving my feelings, but by resolving to follow the young man, and to give him all the aid in my power.

It was now near six o'clock. The night was cold and rainy, and almost dark. I got down, however, safe to the Passage-house, and desired to be conveyed across the Severn. The people in the house tried to dissuade me from my design. They said no one would accompany me, for it was quite a tempest. I replied, that I would pay those handsomely who would go with me. A person present asked me if I would give him three guineas for a boat, I replied I would. He could not for shame retract. He went out, and in about half an hour brought a person with him. We were obliged to have a lanthorn as far as the boat. We got on board, and went off. But such a passage I had never before witnessed. The wind was furious. The waves ran high. I could see nothing but white foam. The boat, also, was tossed up and down in such a manner that it was with great difficulty I could keep my seat. The rain, too, poured down in such torrents, that we were all of us presently wet through. We had been, I apprehend, more than an hour

in this situation, when the boatmen began to complain of cold and weariness. I saw, also, that they began to be uneasy, for they did not know where they were. They had no way of forming any judgement about their course, but by knowing the point from whence the wind blew, and by keeping the boat in a relative position towards it. I encouraged them as well as I could, though I was beginning to be uneasy myself, and also sick. In about a quarter of an hour they began to complain again. They said they could pull no longer. They acknowledged, however, that they were getting nearer to the shore, though on what part of it, they could not tell. I could do nothing but bid them hope. They then began to reproach themselves for having come out with me. I told them I had not forced them, but that it was a matter of their own choice. In the midst of this conversation I informed them that I thought I saw either a star or a light straight forward. They both looked at it, and pronounced it to be a light, and added with great joy that it must be a light in the Passage-house: and so we found it; for in about ten minutes afterwards we landed, and, on reaching the house, learned that a servant maid had been accidentally talking to some other person on the staircase, near a window, with a candle in her hand, and that the light had appeared to us from that circumstance.

It was now near eleven o'clock. My messenger, it appeared, had arrived safe at about five in the evening, and had proceeded on his route. I was very cold on my arrival, and sick also. There seemed to be a chillness all over me, both within and without. Indeed I had not a dry

thread about me. I took some hot brandy and water, and went to bed ; but desired, as soon as my clothes were thoroughly dried, to be called up, that I might go forward. This happened at about two in the morning, when I got up. I took my breakfast by the fireside. I then desired the postboy, if he should meet any persons on the road, to stop, and inform me, as I did not know whether the witnesses might not be coming up by themselves, and whether they might not have passed my messenger without knowing his errand. Having taken these precautions, I departed. I travelled on, but we met no one. I traced, however, my messenger through Newport, Cardiff, and Cowbridge. I was assured, also, that he had not passed me on his return ; nor had any of those passed me, whom he was seeking. At length, when I was within about two miles of Neath, I met him. He had both the witnesses under his care. 'This was a matter of great joy to me. I determined to return with them. It was now nearly two in the afternoon. I accordingly went back, but we did not reach the Passage-house again till nearly two the next morning.

During our journey, neither the wind nor the rain had much abated. It was quite dark on our arrival. We found only one person, and he had been sitting up in expectation of us. It was in vain that I asked him for a boat to put us across the water. He said all the boatmen were in bed ; and, if they were up, he was sure that none of them would venture out. It was thought a mercy by all of them, that we were not lost last night. Difficulties were also started about horses to take us another way. Unable there-

fore to proceed, we took refreshment and went to bed.

We arrived at Bristol between nine and ten the next morning ; but I was so ill, that I could go no further ; I had been cold and shivering ever since my first passage across the Severn, and I had now a violent sore throat, and a fever with it. All I could do was to see the witnesses off for London, and to assign them to the care of an attorney, who should conduct them to the trial. For this purpose I gave them a letter to a friend of the name of Langdale. I saw them depart. The mother of William Lines accompanied them. By a letter received on Tuesday, I learned that they had not arrived in town till Monday morning at three o'clock ; that at about nine or ten they found out the office of Mr. Langdale ; that, on inquiring for him, they heard he was in the country, but that he would be home at noon ; that, finding he had not then arrived, they acquainted his clerk with the nature of their business, and opened my letter to show him the contents of it ; that the clerk went with them to consult some other person on the subject, when he conveyed them to the Old Bailey ; but that, on inquiring at the proper place about the introduction of the witnesses, he learned that the chief mate had been brought to the bar in the morning, and, no person then appearing against him, that he had been discharged by proclamation. Such was the end of all my anxiety and labour in this affair. I was very ill when I received the letter ; but I saw the necessity of bearing up against the disappointment, and I endeavoured to discharge the subject from my mind with the following wish, that the narrow escape which the chief mate had

experienced, and which was entirely owing to the accidental circumstances now explained, might have the effect, under Providence, of producing in him a deep contrition for his offence, and of awakening him to a serious attention to his future life.\*

I was obliged to remain in Bristol a few days longer in consequence of my illness; but as soon as I was able I reached London, when I attended a sitting of the committee after an absence of more than five months. At this committee it was strongly recommended to me to publish a second edition of my *Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, and to insert such of the facts in it, in their proper places, out of those collected in my late travels, as I might judge to be productive of an interesting effect. There appeared also an earnest desire in the committee, that, directly after this, I should begin my *Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave-trade*.

In compliance with their wishes, I determined upon both these works. But I resolved to retire into the country, that, by being subject to less interruption there, I might the sooner finish them. It was proper, however, that I should settle many things in London, before I took my departure from it; and, among these, that I should find out George Ormond and Patric Murray, whom I had sent from Liverpool on account of the information they had given me relative to the murder of Peter Green. I saw no better way than to take them before Sir Sampson

\* He had undoubtedly a narrow escape, for Mr. Langdale's clerk had learned that he had no evidence to produce in his favour. The slave-merchants, it seems, had counted most upon bribing those, who were to come against him, to disappear.



Wright, who was then at the head of the police of the metropolis. He examined, and cross-examined them several times, and apart from each other. He then desired their evidence to be drawn up in the form of depositions, copies of which he gave to me. He had no doubt that the murder would be proved. The circumstances of the deceased being in good health at nine o'clock in the evening, and of his severe sufferings till eleven, and of the nature of the wounds discovered to have been made on his person, and of his death by one in the morning, could never, he said, be done away, by any evidence, who should state that he had been subject to other disorders, which might have occasioned his decease. He found himself therefore compelled to apply to the magistrates of Liverpool for the apprehension of three of the principal officers of the ship. But the answer was, that the ship had sailed, and that they, whose names had been specified, were then, none of them, to be found in Liverpool.

It was now for me to consider, whether I would keep the two witnesses, Ormond and Murray for a year, or perhaps longer, at my own expense, and run the hazard of the death of the officers in the interim, and of other calculable events. I had felt so deeply for the usage of the seamen in this cruel traffic, which indeed had embittered all my journey, that I had no less than nine prosecutions at law upon my hands on their account, and nineteen witnesses detained at my own cost. The committee in London could give me no assistance in these cases. They were the managers of the public purse for the abolition of the Slave-trade, and any expen-

ses of this kind were neither within the limits of their object, nor within the pale of their duty. From the individuals belonging to it, I picked up a few guineas by way of private subscription, and this was all. But a vast load still remained upon me, and such as had occasioned uneasiness to my mind. I thought it therefore imprudent to detain the evidences for this purpose for so long a time, and I sent them back to Liverpool. I commenced, however, a prosecution against the captain at common law for his barbarous usage of them, and desired that it might be pushed on as vigorously as possible; and the result was, that his attorney was so alarmed, particularly after knowing what had been done by Sir Sampson Wright, that he entered into a compromise to pay all the expenses of the suit hitherto incurred, and to give Ormond and Murray a sum of money as damages for the injury which they themselves had sustained. This compromise was acceded to. The men received the money, and signed the release, (of which I insisted upon a copy,) and went to sea again in another trade, thanking me for my interference in their behalf. But by this copy, which I have now in my possession, it appears that care was taken by the captain's attorney to render their future evidence in the case of Peter Green, almost impracticable; for it was there wickedly stated, "that George Ormond and Patric Murray did then and there bind themselves in certain penalties, that they would neither encourage nor support any action at law against the said captain, by or at the suit or prosecution of any other of the seamen now or late on board the said ship, and that they released the said captain also from

all manner of actions, suits, and cause and causes of action, informations, prosecutions and other proceedings, which they then had, or ever had, or could or might have by reason of the said assaults upon their own persons, or *other wrongs or injuries done by the said captain heretofore and to the date of this release.*"\*

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### CHAPTER XIII.

#### *Labours of the Committee to July 1788.*

THE committee, during my absence, had attended regularly at their posts. They had been both vigilant and industrious. They were, in short, the persons, who had been the means of raising the public spirit, which I had observed first at Manchester, and afterwards as I journeyed on.

At one of their meetings a resolution was made, that Granville Sharp, Esquire, be appointed chairman. This appointment, though now first formally made in the minute book, was always understood to have taken place; but the modesty of Mr. Sharp was such, that, though repeatedly pressed, he would never consent to take the chair, and he generally refrained from coming into the room till after he knew it to be taken. Nor could he be prevailed upon, even after this resolution, to alter his conduct: for though he continued to sign the papers, which were handed to him by virtue of holding this office, he never

\* None of the nine actions before mentioned ever came to a trial, but they were all compromised by paying sums to the injured parties.

was once seated as the chairman during the twenty years in which he attended at these meetings. I thought it not improper to mention this trait in his character. Conscious that he engaged in the cause of his fellow-creatures solely upon the sense of his duty as a Christian, he seems to have supposed either that he had done nothing extraordinary to merit such a distinction, or to have been fearful lest the acceptance of it should bring a stain upon the motive, on which alone he undertook it.

At another of their sittings a sub-committee, which had been appointed for the purpose, brought in a design for a seal. An African was seen (as in the figure\*) in chains in a supplicat-



ing posture, kneeling with one knee upon the ground, and with both his hands lifted up to Heaven, and round the seal was observed the following motto, as if he was uttering the words himself, "Am I not a Man and a Brother?" The design having been approved of, a seal was

\*The figure is rather larger than that in the seal.

ordered to be engraved from it. I may mention here, that this seal, simple as the design was, was made to contribute largely, as will be shown in its proper place, towards turning the attention of our countrymen to the case of the injured Africans, and of procuring a warm interest in their favour.

One of the most important measures of the committee was, the adoption and prosecution of an efficient system for circulating their publications. These were sent to individuals in various parts of the kingdom, who were known to be judicious persons and interested in the African cause, and who would take the pains to distribute them with discretion among the people.

The knowledge of the institution of the Society had now spread, and the eagerness among individuals to see the publications of the committee had been so great, that the press was kept almost constantly going during the time now mentioned. No fewer than three thousand lists of the subscribers, with a circular letter prefixed to them, explaining the object of the institution, were ordered to be printed within this period, to which are to be added fifteen hundred of Benet's Account of Guinea, three thousand of the Dean of Middleham's Letters, five thousand Summary Views, and two thousand of a new edition of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, which I had enlarged before the last of these sittings from materials collected in my late tour.

The thanks of the committee were voted during this period to Mr. Alexander Falconbridge, for the assistance he had given me in my inquiries into the nature of the Slave-trade.

As Mr. Falconbridge had but lately returned from Africa, and as facts and circumstances, which had taken place but a little time ago, were less liable to objections (inasmuch as they proved the present state of things) than those which had happened in earlier times, he was prevailed upon to write an account of what he had seen during the four voyages he had made to that continent; and accordingly, within the period which has been mentioned, he began his work.

On account of an increase of business they gradually enlarged their number by the election of new members. The correspondence they maintained was very extensive. They were continually receiving letters containing information and encouragement. Some of these were written by men of eminence and influence. The celebrated Marquis de La Fayette, in a communication he sent them signified the singular pleasure he had received on hearing of the formation of a committee in England for the abolition of the Slave-trade, and the earnest desire he had to promote the object of it. With this view, he informed the committee that he should attempt the formation of a similar society in France. This he conceived to be one of the most effectual measures he could devise for securing the object in question; for he was of opinion, that if the two great nations of France and England were to unite in this humane and Christian work, the other European nations might be induced to follow the example.

Of the indefatigable labours and untiring faithfulness of the committee the following summary will give some idea. From about the middle of May 1787, to the middle of July 1788

they had held no less than fifty-one committees. These generally occupied them from about six in the evening till about eleven at night. In the intervals between the committees they were often occupied, having each of them some object committed to his charge. It is remarkable, too, that though they were all, except one, engaged in business or trade, and though they had the same calls as other men for innocent recreation, and the same interruptions of their health, there were individuals, who were not absent more than five or six times within this period. In the course of the thirteen months, during which they had exercised this public trust, they had printed, and afterwards distributed, not at random, but judiciously, and through respectable channels, (besides twenty-six thousand five hundred and twenty-six reports, accounts of debates in parliament, and other small papers,) no less than fifty-one thousand four hundred and thirty-two pamphlets, or books.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Further progress—Petitions begin to be sent to parliament—The king orders the privy council to inquire into the Slave-trade—Author called up to town—his interviews with Mr. Pitt—and with Mr. (now Lord) Grenville—Liverpool delegates examined first—these prejudice the council—this prejudice at length counteracted—Public anxious for the introduction of the question into parliament—Message of Mr. Pitt to the committee concerning it—Day fixed for the motion—discussion of the general question deferred till the next sessions.*

By this time the nature of the Slave-trade had, in consequence of the labours of the committee and of their several correspondents, become generally known throughout the kingdom. It had excited a general attention, and there was among people a general feeling in behalf of the wrongs of Africa. This feeling had also, as may be collected from what has been already mentioned, broken out into language; for not only had the traffic become the general subject of conversation, but public meetings had taken place, in which it had been discussed, and of which the result was, that an application to parliament had been resolved upon in many places concerning it. By the middle of February not fewer than thirty-five petitions had been delivered to the commons, and it was known that others were on their way to the same house.

This ferment in the public mind, which had shown itself in the public prints even before the



petitions had been resolved upon, had excited the attention of government. To coincide with the wishes of the people on this subject, appeared to those in authority to be a desirable thing. To abolish the trade, replete as it was with misery, was desirable also : but it was so connected with the interest of individuals, and so interwoven with the commerce and revenue of the country, that a hasty abolition of it without a previous inquiry appeared to them to be likely to be productive of as much misery as good. The king, therefore, by an order of council, dated February 11, 1788, directed that a committee of privy council should sit as a board of trade, "to take into their consideration the present state of the African trade, particularly as far as related to the practice and manner of purchasing or obtaining slaves on the coast of Africa, and the importation and sale thereof, either in the British colonies and settlements, or in the foreign colonies and settlements in America or the West-Indies ; and also as far as related to the effects and consequences of the trade both in Africa and in the said colonies and settlements, and to the general commerce of this kingdom ; and that they should report to him in council the result of their inquiries, with such observations as they might have to offer thereupon."

Of this order of council Mr. Wilberforce, who had attended to this great subject, as far as his health would permit, since I left him, had received notice ; but he was then too ill himself to take any measures concerning it. He therefore wrote to me, and begged of me to repair to London immediately in order to get such evidence ready, as we might think it eligible to introduce

when the council sat. At that time, as appears from the former chapter, I had finished the additions to my Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, and I had now proceeded about half way in that of the Impolicy of it. This summons, however, I obeyed, and returned to town on the fourteenth of February, from which day to the twenty-fourth of May I shall now give the history of our proceedings.

My first business in London was to hold a conversation with Mr. Pitt previously to the meeting of the council, and to try to interest him, as the first minister of state, in our favour. For this purpose Mr. Wilberforce had opened the way for me, and an interview took place. We were in free conversation together for a considerable time, during which we went through most of the branches of the subject. Mr. Pitt appeared to me to have but little knowledge of it. He had also his doubts, which he expressed openly, on many points. He was at a loss to conceive how private interest should not always restrain the master of the slave from abusing him. This matter I explained to him as well as I could; and if he was not entirely satisfied with my interpretation of it, he was at least induced to believe that cruel practices were more probable than he had imagined. A second circumstance, the truth of which he doubted, was the mortality and usage of seamen in this trade; and a third was the statement, by which so much had been made of the riches of Africa, and of the genius and abilities of her people; for he seemed at a loss to comprehend, if these things were so, how it had happened that they should not have been more generally noticed before. I

promised to satisfy him upon these points, and an interview was fixed for this purpose the next day.

At the time appointed I went with my books, papers and African productions. Mr. Pitt examined the former himself. He turned over leaf after leaf, in which the copies of the muster-rolls were contained, with great patience; and when he had looked over above a hundred pages accurately, and found the name of every seaman inserted, his former abode or service, the time of his entry, and what had become of him, either by death, discharge or desertion, he expressed his surprise at the great pains which had been taken in this branch of the inquiry, and confessed, with some emotion, that his doubts were wholly removed with respect to the destructive nature of this employ; and he said, moreover, that the facts contained in these documents, if they had been but fairly copied, could never be disproved. He was equally astonished at the various woods and other productions of Africa, but most of all at the manufactures of the natives in cotton, leather, gold, and iron, which were laid before him. These he handled and examined over and over again. Many sublime thoughts seemed to rush in upon him at once at the sight of these, some of which he expressed with observations becoming a great and dignified mind. He thanked me for the light I had given him on many of the branches of this great question. And I went away under a certain conviction that I had left him much impressed in our favour.

My next visit was to Mr. (now Lord) Grenville, I called upon him at the request of Mr.

Wilberforce, who had previously written to him from Bath, as he had promised to attend the meetings of the privy council during the examinations which were to take place. I found in the course of our conversation that Mr. Grenville had not then more knowledge of the subject than Mr. Pitt; but I found him differently circumstanced in other respects, for I perceived in him a warm feeling in behalf of the injured Africans, and that he had no doubt of the possibility of all the barbarities which had been alleged against this traffic. I showed him all my papers and some of my natural productions, which he examined. I was with him the next day, and once again afterwards, so that the subject was considered in all its parts. The effect of this interview with him was of course different from that upon the minister. In the former case I had removed doubts, and given birth to an interest in favour of our cause. But I had here only increased an interest which had already been excited. I had only enlarged the mass of feeling, or added zeal to zeal, or confirmed resolutions and reasonings. Disposed in this manner originally himself, and strengthened by the documents with which I had furnished him, Mr. Grenville contracted an enmity to the Slave-trade, which was never afterwards diminished.\*

A report having gone abroad, that the committee of privy council would only examine those who were interested in the continuance of the

\* I have not mentioned the difference between these two eminent persons, with a view of drawing any invidious comparisons, but because, as these statements are true, such persons as have a high opinion of the late Mr. Pitt's judgement, may see that this great man did not espouse the cause hastily, or merely as a matter of feeling, but upon the conviction of his own mind.

trade, I found it necessary to call upon Mr. Pitt again, and to inform him of it, when I received an assurance that every person whom I chose to send to the council in behalf of the committee, should be heard. This gave rise to a conversation relative to those witnesses whom we had to produce on the side of the abolition. And here I was obliged to disclose our weakness in this respect. I owned with sorrow, that, though I had obtained specimens and official documents in abundance to prove many important points, yet I had found it difficult to prevail upon persons to be publicly examined on this subject. The only persons, we could then count upon, were Mr. Ramsay, Mr. H. Gandy, Mr. Falconbridge, Mr. Newton, and the Dean of Middleham. There was one, however, who would be a host of himself, if we could but gain him. I then mentioned Mr. Norris. I told Mr. Pitt the nature\* and value of the testimony which he had given me at Liverpool, and the great zeal he had discovered to serve the cause. I doubted, however, if he would come to London for this purpose, even if I wrote to him ; for he was intimate with almost all the owners of slave-vessels in Liverpool, and living among these he would not like to incur their resentment, by taking a prominent part against them. I therefore entreated Mr. Pitt to send him a summons of council to attend, hoping that Mr. Norris would then be pleased to come up, as he would be enabled to reply to his friends, that his appearance had not been voluntary. Mr. Pitt, however, informed me, that a summons from a committee of privy council sitting as a board of trade was not

\*See his evidence Chap. x.

binding upon the subject, and therefore that I had no other means left but of writing to him, and he desired me to do this by the first post.

This letter I accordingly wrote, and sent it to my friend William Rathbone, who was to deliver it in person, and to use his own influence at the same time ; but I received for answer, that Mr. Norris was then in London. Upon this I tried to find him out, to entreat him to consent to an examination before the council. At length I found his address ; but before I could see him, I was told by the bishop of London, that he had come up as a Liverpool delegate in support of the Slave-trade. Astonished at this information, I made the bishop acquainted with the case, and asked him how it became me to act ; for I was fearful lest, by exposing Mr. Norris, I should violate the rights of hospitality on the one hand, and by not exposing him, that I should not do my duty to the cause I had undertaken on the other. His advice was, that I should see him, and ask him to explain the reasons of his conduct. I called upon him for this purpose, but he was out. He sent me, however, a letter soon afterwards, which was full of flattery, and in which, after having paid high compliments to the general force of my arguments, and the general justice and humanity of my sentiments on this great question, which had made a deep impression upon his mind, he had found occasion to differ from me, since we had last parted, on particular points, and that he had therefore less reluctantly yielded to the call of becoming a delegate ; though notwithstanding he would gladly have declined the office if he could have done it with propriety.

At length the council began their examina-

tions. Mr. Norris, Lieutenant Matthews, of the navy, who had just left a slave employ in Africa, and Mr. James Penny, formerly a slave-captain, and then interested as a merchant in the trade, (which three were the delegates from Liverpool) took possession of the ground first. Mr. Miles, Mr. Weuves, and others, followed them on the same side. The evidence which they gave, as previously concerted between themselves, may be shortly represented thus: They denied that kidnapping either did or could take place in Africa, or that wars were made there, for the purpose of procuring slaves. Having done away these wicked practices from their system, they maintained positions which were less exceptionable, or that the natives of Africa generally became slaves in consequence of having been made prisoners in just wars, or in consequence of their various crimes. They then gave a melancholy picture of the despotism and barbarity of some of the African princes, among whom the custom of sacrificing their own subjects prevailed. But of all others, that which was afforded by Mr. Norris on this ground was the most frightful. The king of Dahomey, he said, sported with the lives of his people in the most wanton manner. He had seen at the gates of his palace, two piles of heads like those of shot in an arsenal. Within the palace the heads of persons newly put to death were strewed at the distance of a few yards in the passage which led to his apartment. This custom of human sacrifice by the king of Dahomey was not on one occasion only, but on many; such as on the reception of messengers from neighbouring states, or of white merchants, or on days of ceremonial.

But the great carnage was once a year, when the poll tax was paid by his subjects. A thousand persons at least were sacrificed annually on these different occasions. The great men, too, of the country cut off a few heads on festival days. From all these particulars the humanity of the Slave-trade was inferred, because it took away the inhabitants of Africa into lands where no such barbarities were known. But the humanity of it was insisted upon by positive circumstances also, namely, that a great number of the slaves were prisoners of war, and that in former times all such were put to death, whereas now they were saved ; so that there was a great accession of happiness to Africa since the introduction of the trade.

These statements, and those of others on the same side of the question, had a great effect, as may easily be conceived, upon the feelings of those of the council who were present. Some of them began immediately to be prejudiced against us. There were others who even thought that it was almost unnecessary to proceed in the inquiry, for that the trade was actually a blessing. They had little doubt that all our assertions concerning it would be found false. The bishop of London himself was so impressed by these unexpected accounts, that he asked me if Mr. Falconbridge, whose pamphlet had been previously sent by the committee to every member of the council, was worthy of belief, and if he would substantiate publicly what he had thus written. But these impressions unfortunately were not confined to those who had been present at the examinations. These could not help communicating them to others. Hence in all the



higher circles (some of which I sometimes used to frequent) I had the mortification to hear of nothing but the Liverpool evidence, and of our own credulity, and of the impositions which had been practised upon us: of these reports the planters and merchants did not fail to avail themselves. They boasted that they would soon do away all the idle tales which had been invented against them. They desired the public only to suspend their judgement till the privy council report should be out, when they would see the folly and wickedness of all our allegations. A little more evidence, and all would be over. On the twenty-second of March, though the committee of council had not then held its sittings more than a month, and these only twice or thrice a week, the following paragraph was seen in a morning paper: "The report of the committee of privy council will be ready in a few days. After due examination it appears that the major part of the complaints against this trade are ill founded. Some regulations, however, are expected to take place, which may serve in a certain degree to appease the cause of humanity."

But while they who were interested had produced this outcry against us, in consequence of what had fallen from their own witnesses in the course of their examinations, they had increased it considerably by the industrious circulation of a most artful pamphlet among persons of rank and fortune at the west end of the metropolis, which was called, scriptural researches on the lawfulness of the Slave-trade. This they had procured to be written by R. Harris, who was then clerk in a slave-house in Liverpool, but had been formerly a clergyman and a Jesuit. As they

had maintained in the first instance, as has been already shown, the humanity of the traffic, so, by means of this pamphlet they asserted its consistency with revealed religion. That such a book should have made converts in such an age is surprising; and yet many, who ought to have known better, were carried away by it; and we had now absolutely to contend, and almost to regrade ourselves by doing so, against the double argument of the humanity and the holiness of the trade.

By these means, but particularly by the former, the current of opinion in particular circles ran against us for the first month, and so strong, that it was impossible for us to stem it at once: but as some of the council recovered from their panic, and their good sense became less biassed by their feelings, and they were in a state to hear reason, their prejudices began to subside. It began now to be understood among them, that almost all the witnesses were concerned in the continuance of the trade. It began to be known also, (for Mr. Pitt and the bishop of London took care that it should be circulated,) that Mr. Norris had but a short time before furnished me at Liverpool with information, all of which he had concealed\* from the council, but all of which made for the abolition of it. Mr. Devaynes also, a respectable member of parliament, who had been in Africa, and who had been appealed to by Mr. Norris, when examined before the privy council, in behalf of his extraordinary facts,

\* This was also the case with another witness, Mr. Weuves. He had given me accounts, before any stir was made about the slave-trade, relative to it, all of which he kept back when he was examined there.

was unable, when summoned, to confirm them to the desired extent. From this evidence the council collected, that human sacrifices were not made on the arrival of white traders, as had been asserted; that there was no poll tax in Dahomey at all; and that Mr. Norris must have been mistaken on these points, and his statements must have related to the ceremony of watering the graves, when about sixty persons suffered. This latter custom moreover appeared to have been a religious superstition of the country, such as at Otaheite, or in Britain in the time of the Druids, and to have had nothing to do with the Slave-trade.\* With respect to prisoners of war, Mr. Devaynes allowed that the old, the lame, and the wounded, were often put to death on the spot; but this was to save the trouble of bringing them away. The young and the healthy were driven off for sale; but if they were not sold when offered, they were not killed, but reserved for another market, or became house-slaves to the conquerors. Mr. Devaynes also maintained, contrary to the allegations of the others, that a great number of persons were kidnapped in order to be sold to the ships, and that the government, where this happened, was not strong enough to prevent it. But besides these drawbacks from the weight of the testimony which had been given, it began to be perceived by some of the lords of the council, that the cruel superstitions which had been described, obtained only in one or two countries in Africa, and these of insignificant extent; whereas at

\* Being a religious custom, it would still have gone on, though the Slave-trade had been abolished: nor could the merchants at any time have brought off a single victim.

the time, when their minds were carried away as it were by their feelings, they had supposed them to attach to the whole of that vast continent. They perceived also, that there were circumstances related in the evidence by the delegates themselves, by means of which, if they were true, the inhumanity of the trade might be established, and this to their own disgrace. They had all confessed that such slaves as the white traders refused to buy were put to death; and yet that these traders, knowing that this would be the case, had the barbarity uniformly to reject those whom it did not suit them to purchase. Mr. Matthews had rejected one of this description himself, whom he saw afterwards destroyed. Mr. Penny had known the refuse thrown down Melimba rock. Mr. Norris himself, when certain prisoners of war were offered to him for sale, declined buying them because they appeared unhealthy; and though the king then told him that he would put them to death, he could not be prevailed upon to take them, but left them to their hard fate; and he had the boldness to state afterwards, that it was his belief that many of them actually suffered.

These considerations had the effect of diminishing the prejudices of some of the council on this great question: and when this was perceived to be the case, it was the opinion of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Grenville, and the bishop of London, that we should send three or four of our own evidences for examination, who might help to restore matters to an equilibrium. Accordingly Mr. Falconbridge, and some others, all of whom were to speak to the African part of the subject, were introduced. These produced a certain

weight in the opposite scale. But soon after these had been examined, Dr. Andrew Spaarman, professor of physic, and inspector of the museum of the royal academy at Stockholm, and his companion, C. B. Wadstrom, chief director of the assay-office there, arrived in England. These gentlemen had been lately sent to Africa by the late king of Sweden, to make discoveries in botany, mineralogy, and other departments of science. For this purpose the Swedish ambassador at Paris had procured them permission from the French government to visit the countries bordering on the Senegal, and had ensured them protection there. They had been conveyed to the place of their destination, where they had remained from August 1787 to the end of January 1788; but meeting with obstacles which they had not foreseen, they had left it, and had returned to Havre de Grace, from whence they had just arrived in London, on their way home. It so happened, that by means of George Harrison, one of our committee, I fell in unexpectedly with these gentlemen. I had not long been with them before I perceived the great treasure I had found. They gave me many beautiful specimens of African produce. They showed me their journals, which they had regularly kept from day to day. In these I had the pleasure of seeing a number of circumstances minuted down, all relating to the Slave-trade, and even drawings on the same subject. I obtained a more accurate and satisfactory knowledge of the manners and customs of the Africans from these, than from all the persons put together whom I had yet seen. I was anxious, therefore, to take them before the committee of council, to which they

were pleased to consent; and as Dr. Spaarman was to leave London in a few days, I procured him an introduction first. His evidence went to show, that the natives of Africa lived in a fruitful and luxuriant country, which supplied all their wants, and that they would be a happy people if it were not for the existence of the Slave-trade. He instanced wars which he knew to have been made by the Moors upon the Negroes (for they were entered upon wholly at the instigation of the white traders) for the purpose of getting slaves, and he had the pain of seeing the unhappy captives brought in on such occasions, and some of them in a wounded state. Among them were many women and children, and the women were in great affliction. He saw also the king of Barbessin send out his parties on expeditions of a similar kind, and he saw them return with slaves. The king had been made intoxicated on purpose, by the French agents, or he would never have consented to the measure. He stated also, that in consequence of the temptations held out by slave-vessels coming upon the coast, the natives seized one another in the night, when they found opportunity; and even invited others to their houses, whom they treacherously detained, and sold at these times; so that every enormity was practised in Africa, in consequence of the existence of the trade. These specific instances made a proper impression upon the lords of the council in their turn: for Dr. Spaarman was a man of high character; he possessed the confidence of his sovereign; he had no interest whatever in giving his evidence on this subject, either on one or the other side; his means of information too had been large; he

had also recorded the facts which had come before him, and he had his journal, written in the French language, to produce. The tide therefore, which had run so strongly against us, began now to turn a little in our favour.

While these examinations were going on, petitions continued to be sent to the house of commons, from various parts of the kingdom. No less than one hundred and three were presented in this session. The city of London, though she was drawn the other way by the cries of commercial interest, made a sacrifice to humanity and justice. The two Universities applauded her conduct by their own example. Large manufacturing towns and whole counties expressed their sentiments and wishes in a similar manner. The Established Church in separate dioceses, and the Quakers and other Dissenters, as separate religious bodies, joined in one voice upon this occasion.

By the latter end of the month of March, there was an anxious expectation in the public, notwithstanding the privy council had taken up the subject, that some notice should be taken in the lower house of Parliament of the numerous petitions which had been presented there. There was the same expectation in many of the members of it themselves. Lord Penrhyn, one of the representatives for Liverpool, and a planter also, had anticipated this notice, by moving for such papers relative to ships employed, goods exported, produce imported, and duties upon the same, as would show the vast value of the trade, which it was in contemplation to abolish. But at this time Mr. Wilberforce was ill, and unable to gratify the expectations which had been thus

apparent. The committee, therefore, who partook of the anxiety of the public, knew not what to do. They saw that two thirds of the session had already passed. They saw no hope of Mr. Wilberforce's recovery for some time. Rumors too were afloat, that other members, of whose plans they knew nothing, and who might even make emancipation their object, would introduce the business into the house. Thus situated, they waited as patiently as they could till the eighth of April,\* when they resolved to write to Mr. Wilberforce, to explain to him their fears and wishes, and to submit it to his consideration, whether, if he were unable himself, he would appoint some one, in whom he could confide, to make some motion in parliament on the subject.

But the public expectation became now daily more visible. The inhabitants of Manchester, many of whom had signed the petition for that place, became impatient and they appointed Thomas Walker and Thomas Cooper, Esquires, as their delegates, to proceed to London to communicate with the committee on this subject, to assist them in their deliberations upon it, and to give their attendance while it was under discussion by the legislature.

At the time of the arrival of the delegates, who were received as such by the committee, a letter came from Bath, in which it was stated that Mr. Wilberforce's health was in such a precarious state, that his physicians dared not allow him to read any letter, which related to the subject of the Slave-trade.

The committee were now again at a loss how

\* Brissot attended in person at this committee in his way to America, which it was then an object with him to visit..



to act, when they were relieved from this doubtful situation by a message from Mr. Pitt, who desired a conference with their chairman. Mr. Sharp accordingly went and on his return made the following report: "He had a full opportunity," he said, "of explaining to Mr. Pitt that the desire of the committee went to the entire abolition of the Slave-trade. Mr. Pitt assured him that his heart was with the committee as to this object, and that he considered himself pledged to Mr. Wilberforce, that the cause should not sustain any injury from his indisposition; but at the same time observed, that the subject was of great political importance, and it was requisite to proceed in it with temper and prudence. He did not apprehend, as the examinations before the privy council would yet take up some time, that the subject could be fully investigated in the present session of parliament; but said he would consider whether the forms of the house would admit of any measures, that would be obligatory on them to take it up early in the ensuing session."

In about a week after this conference, Mr. Morton Pitt was deputed by the minister to write to the committee, to say that he had found precedents for such a motion as he conceived to be proper, and that he would submit it to the house of commons in a few days.

At the next meeting, which was on the sixth of May, and at which major Cartwright and the Manchester delegates assisted, Mr. Morton Pitt attended as a member of the committee, and said that the minister had fixed his motion for the ninth. It was then resolved that deputations should be sent to some of the leading members

of parliament, to request their support of the approaching motion. I was included in one of these, and in that which was to wait upon Mr. Fox. We were received by him in a friendly manner. On putting the question to him, which related to the object of our mission, Mr. Fox paused for a little while, as if in the act of deliberation; when he assured us unequivocally, and in language which could not be misunderstood that he would support the object of the committee to its fullest extent, being convinced that there was no remedy for the evil, but in the total abolition of the trade.

At length, the ninth, or the day fixed upon, arrived, when this important subject was to be mentioned in the house of commons for the first time,\* with a view to the public discussion of it.

Mr. Pitt rose. He said he intended to move a resolution relative to a subject, which was of more importance than any which had ever been agitated in that house. This honour he should not have had, but for a circumstance, which he could not but deeply regret, the severe indisposition of his friend Mr. Wilberforce, in whose hands every measure, which belonged to justice, humanity, and the national interest, was peculiarly well placed. The subject in question was no less than that of the Slave-trade. It was obvious from the great number of petitions, which had been presented concerning it, how much it had engaged the public attention, and consequently how much it deserved the serious notice

\* David Hartley made a motion some years before in the same house, as has been shown in a former part of this work, but this was only to establish a proposition, That the Slave-trade was contrary to the Laws of God and the Rights of Man.

of that house, and how much it became their duty to take some measure concerning it. But whatever was done on such a subject, every one would agree, ought to be done with the maturest deliberation. Two opinions had prevailed without doors, as appeared from the language of the different petitions. It had been pretty generally thought that the African Slave-trade ought to be abolished. There were others, however, who thought that it only stood in need of regulations. But all had agreed that it ought not to remain as it stood at present. But that measure, which it might be the most proper to take, could only be discovered by a cool, patient, and diligent examination of the subject in all its circumstances, relations, and consequences. This had induced him to form an opinion, that the present was not the proper time for discussing it; for the session was now far advanced, and there was also a want of proper materials for the full information of the house. It would, he thought, be better discussed, when it might produce some useful debate, and when that inquiry, which had been instituted by his majesty's ministers, (he meant the examination by a committee of privy council,) should be brought to such a state of maturity, as to make it fit that the result of it should be laid before the house. That inquiry, he trusted, would facilitate their investigation, and enable them the better to proceed to a decision, which should be equally founded on principles of humanity, justice, and sound policy. As there was not a probability of reaching so desirable an end in the present state of the business, he meant to move a resolution to pledge the house to the discussion of the question early in the

next session. If by that time his honourable friend should be recovered, which he hoped would be the case, then he (Mr. Wilberforce) would take the lead in it; but should it unfortunately happen otherwise, then he (the chancellor of the exchequer) pledged himself to bring forward some proposition concerning it. The house, however, would observe, that he had studiously avoided giving any opinion of his own on this great subject. He thought it wiser to defer this till the time of the discussion should arrive. He concluded with moving, after having read the names of the places from whence the different petitions had come, "That this house will, early in the next session of parliament proceed to take into consideration the circumstances of the Slave-trade complained of in the said petitions, and what may be fit to be done thereupon."

This motion of Mr. Pitt was warmly discussed and at considerable length. The principal speakers upon it, were Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, Sir William Dolben, Lord Penrhyn, and Mr. Gascoyn. The two last were members from Liverpool, and were strongly opposed to meddling with the question of the abolition of the Slave-trade at any time.

Mr. Fox wished that there might be no delay, he said he was sorry the consideration of the question, but more particularly where so much human suffering was concerned, should be put off to another session, when it was obvious that no advantage could be gained by delay.

At length when the question was put the resolution was agreed to unanimously. Thus ended the first discussion that ever took place in the

commons, on this important subject. 'This debate, though many of the persons concerned in it abstained cautiously from entering into the merits of the general question, became interesting, in consequence of circumstances attending it. Several rose up at once to give relief, as it were, to their feelings by utterance ; but by so doing they were prevented, many of them, from being heard. They who were heard spoke with peculiar energy, as if warmed in an extraordinary manner by the subject. There was an apparent enthusiasm in behalf of the injured Africans. It was supposed by some, that there was a moment, in which, if the chancellor of the exchequer had moved for an immediate abolition of the trade, he would have carried it that night and both he and others, who professed an attachment to the cause, were censured for not having taken a due advantage of the disposition which was so apparent. But independently of the inconsistency of doing this on the part of the ministry, while the privy council were in the midst of their inquiries, and of the improbability that the other branches of the legislature would have concurred in so hasty a measure ; what good would have accrued to the cause, if the abolition had been then carried ? Those concerned in the cruel system would never have rested quietly under the stigma under which they then laboured. They would have urged, that they had been condemned unheard. The merchants would have said, that they had had no notice of such an event, that they might prepare a way for their vessels in other trades. The planters would have said that they had had no time allowed them to provide such supplies from Africa as might enable the

to keep up their respective stocks. They would, both of them, have called aloud for immediate indemnification. They would have decried the policy of the measure of the abolition; and where had it been proved? They would have demanded a reverse of it; and might they not, in cooler moments, have succeeded? Whereas, by entering into a patient discussion of the merits of the question; by bringing evidence upon it; by reasoning upon that evidence night after night, and year after year, and thus by disputing the ground inch as it were by inch, the abolition of the Slave-trade stands upon a rock, upon which it never can be shaken. Many of those who were concerned in the cruel system have now given up their prejudices, because they became convinced in the contest. A stigma too has been fixed upon it, which can never be erased: and in a large record, in which the cruelty and injustice of it have been recognized in indelible characters, its impolicy also has been eternally enrolled.















